THE UNMISSABLE END-OF-YEAR ISSUE!

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GUITAR WORLD

GUITAR & BASS TRANSCRIPTIONS

OZZY & JEFF BECK
PATIENT NUMBER 9

THE DOORS
RIDERS ON THE STORM
(SOLO GUITAR ARRANGEMENT)

BILLY IDOL
REBEL YELL

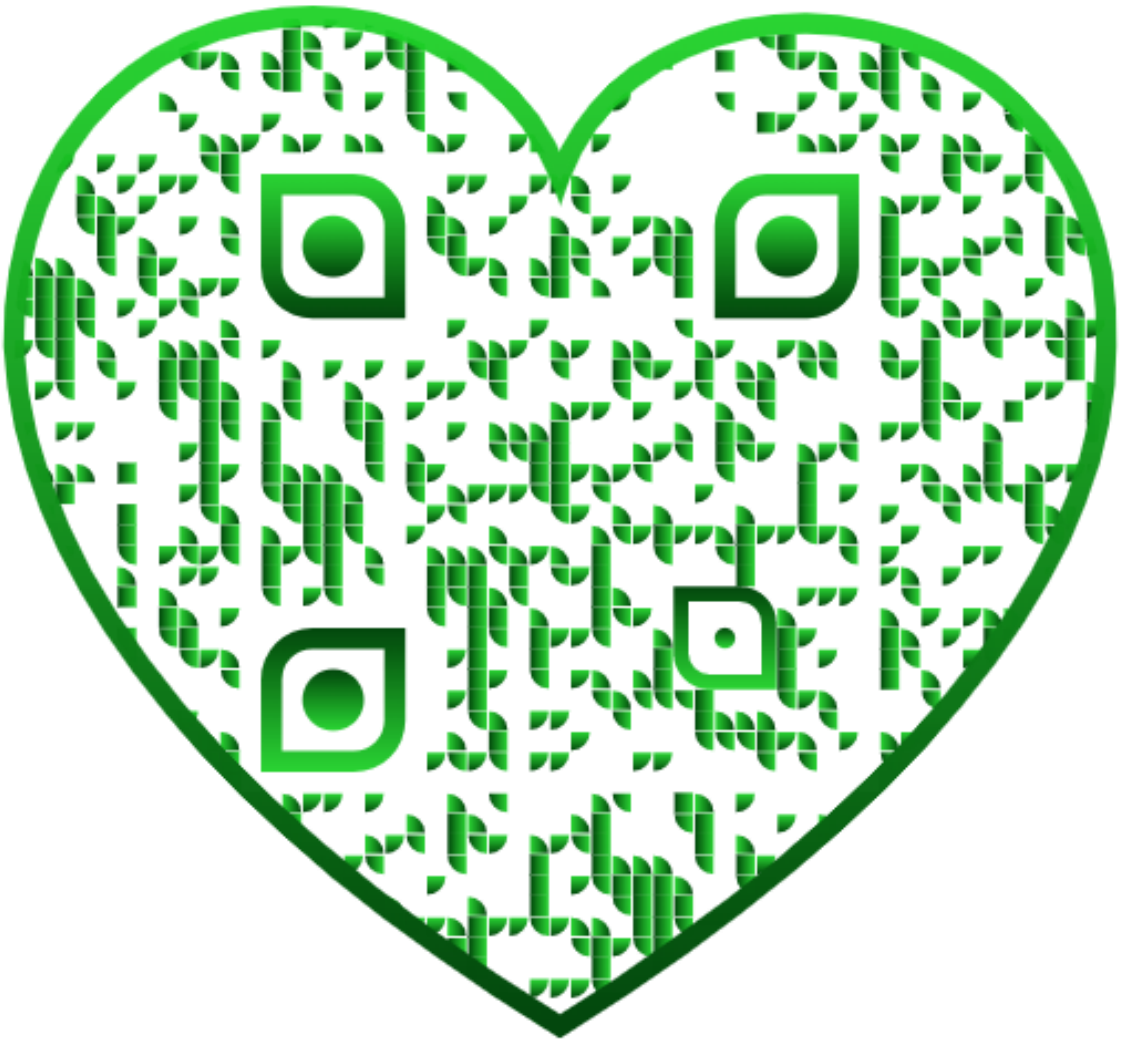
THE BEST OF 2023
THE GUITARISTS, THE GEAR, THE SOLOS & *MORE!*

"It was like having my dad right there!"

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

- THE MAKING OF *MAMMOTH II*
- THE NEW FRANKENSTEIN RELICS REVIEWED!

FUTURE



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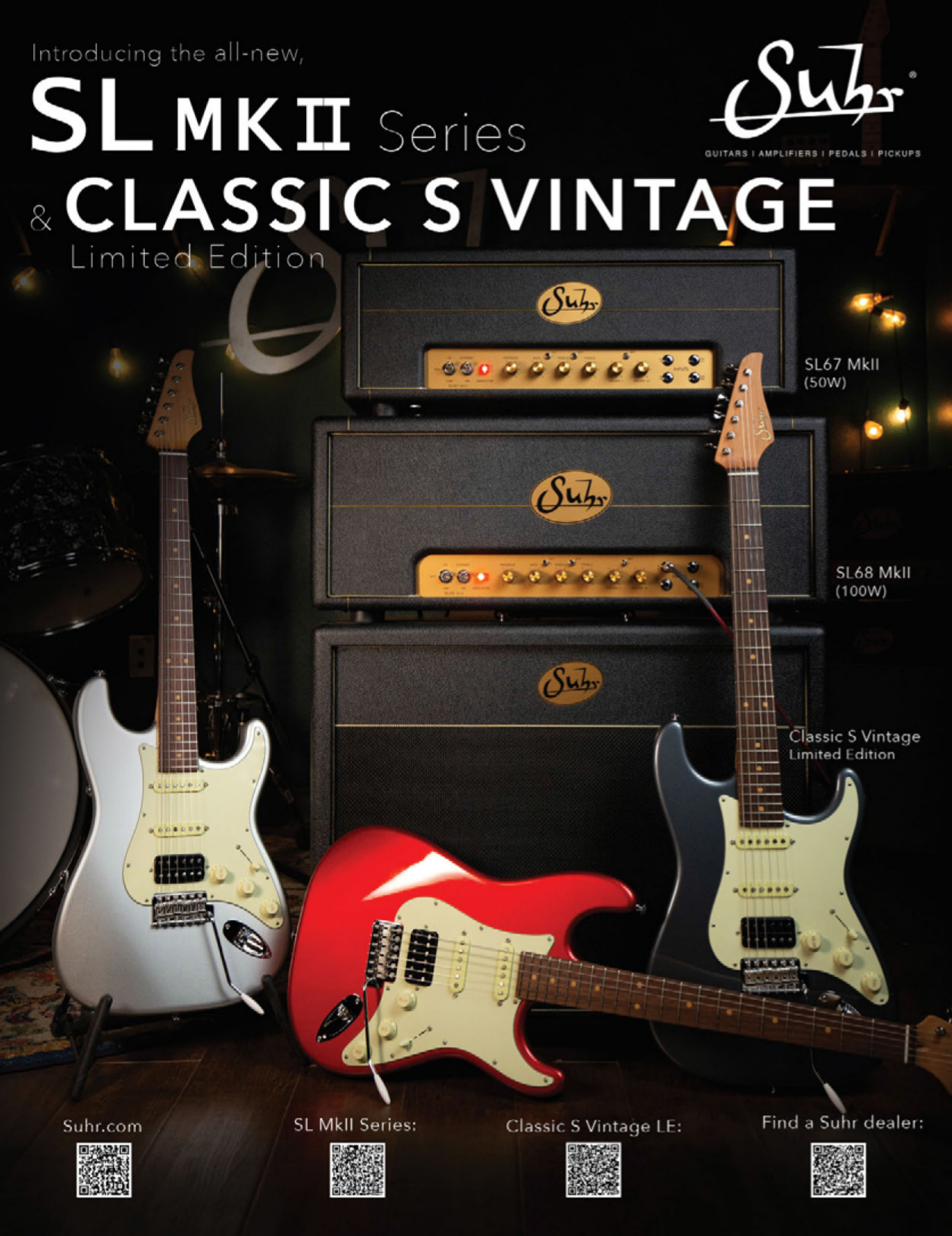
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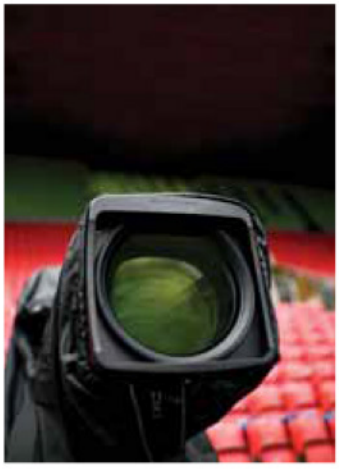
VOL. 45 | NO. 1 | JANUARY 2024

GUITARS ON TV

USUALLY, I'D USE this space to tell you what a great — or at least interesting — year this has been in guitar land, but I think you'll get the gist when you read everything that appears between pages 30 and 71. Instead, I'd like to discuss some pretty cool news, namely the subtle uptick in "guitar appearances" on TV in recent months, especially in commercials. Why is this good? It means that directors, show runners, camera operators and set decorators are getting wise to the fact that guitars — and, by extension, guitarists — are dang cool! A few examples:



RAMSEY CARDY - SPORTSFILE/UEFA VIA GETTY IMAGES (CAMERA) CLAUDIA SCHMIDT (PEDAL)

Twisted Tea commercial during the Ohio State-Indiana game on September 1: A guy who looks like he's part of a college band ("college band" as in tubas, flutes, trumpets, pom-poms and weird uniforms) is playing a single-pickup Epiphone SG.

Pre-game show at the Nashville-Charlotte MLS match on September 2: I spotted Zach Person — who we covered in our August 2021 issue — playing the National Anthem on a yellow Gibson Les Paul Custom. Go, NY Red Bulls and Philly Union!

Hotel Indigo commercial in mid October: A woman is playing a Rickenbacker guitar in a club. The body looks like a 4001 bass, so it might be a rare 480XC (or it's just a cheapo Ric knockoff).

AtlantiCare commercial in mid October: There's a PRS guitar in the corner of some guy's home office. Sorry, I was on vacation when I saw this, so I can't get more specific. I also spotted a purple Yamaha guitar in another commercial (sorry, vacation!) — *and* a very nice Gibson Les Paul burst gets some decent screen time on Netflix's *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

Is it just me, or has anyone else out there noticed this potential trend?

— ***Damian Fanelli***

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THE BEST OF 2023

VOL. 45 | NO. 1 | JANUARY 2024

30 THE BIGGEST GUITAR NEWS OF 2023

If you've been unconscious since January, we've got you covered! Check out our guide to the biggest guitar news of 2023 — sadly including some truly heartbreaking stuff (such as the deaths of Jeff Beck and Gary Rossington)

38 OUR FAVORITE NEW GEAR OF THE YEAR

Nine pages' worth of the all-new-for-2023 gear that caught our eyeballs, with (we admit) an emphasis on guitars and pedals

48 2023'S BEST SONGS, RIFFS AND SOLOS

A gaggle of guitar-playing pros choose 2023's best songs, guitar solos, riffs, new bands, new guitarists, new gear, the guitarist of the year and more. Featuring input from Zakk Wylde, Marty Friedman, Sophie Lloyd, Herman Li, Matt Heafy, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Nuno and more

56 GW'S GUITARISTS OF THE YEAR

GW's editors round up — in one tidy place — the guitarists who made the biggest splash in our odd universe in 2023

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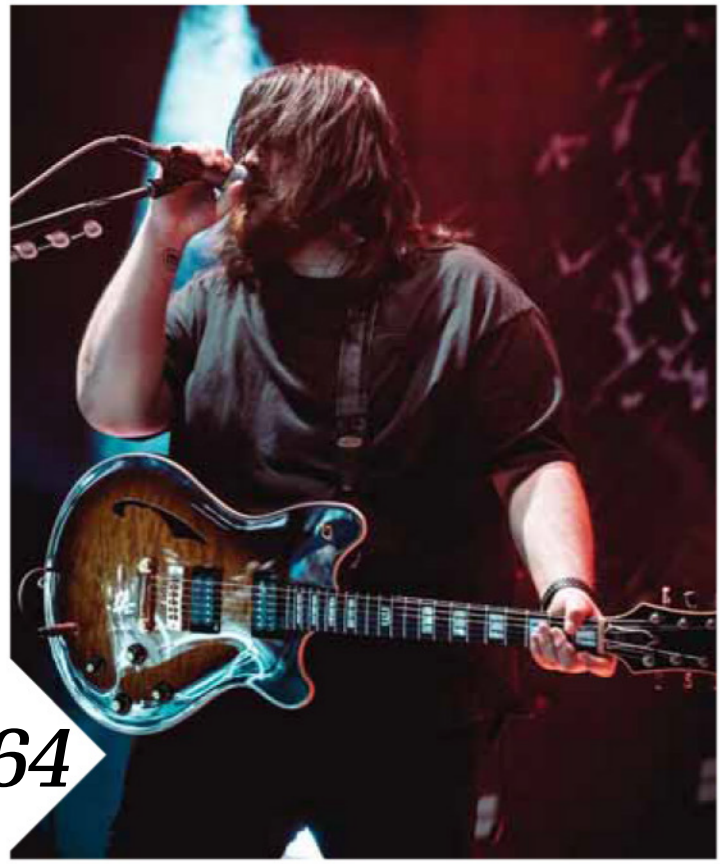
"It felt like a really special moment to celebrate by using the Frankenstein and the original Marshall through one of Dad's OG Marshall cabs from the club days"



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"Patient Number 9"
by Ozzy Osbourne (featuring Jeff Beck)

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"Rebel Yell"
by Billy Idol

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"Riders on the Storm"
by the Doors (solo guitar arrangement)

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by Josh Smith

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Was the Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress the first flanger pedal? Possibly. It was certainly one of the first, as confirmed by ads for the Electric Mistress, MXR Flanger and Tycobrahe Pedalflanger that appeared concurrently in *Guitar Player* in late 1976...

COVER PHOTO: RYAN PIORKOWSKI

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

SOUNDING BOARD

Got something you want to say? **EMAIL US AT: GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com**

Equal credit to Perry and Whitford

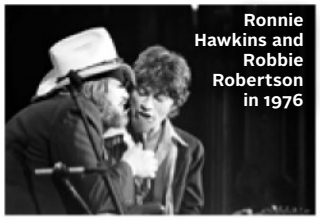
Thank you for a great issue [*December 2023*]. It was the best issue with the best articles and interviews that I've seen and read in a very long time. Thank you for the insight into Aerosmith [*via*] great articles and interviews with them. It's about time they got credited as a band and not just one person. I had always thought Joe Perry was the only lead guitarist in the band — until I saw them in person on the *Rocks* tour in 1976. Brad and Joe were trading riffs and solos the whole show. They are a world-class rock 'n' roll guitar team. The rest of the band were solid too. And those early photos of Joe and Brad playing B.C. Rich guitars through Marshall amps in the Seventies got me into doing that as well. Well done!

— *Mario Vazquez*

A Thanksgiving to remember

In the Robbie Roberston feature in the December issue (in the item about the Band's "Who Do You Love"), you said the Band's final concert was on Thanksgiving Day 1977, when in reality it was Thanksgiving Day 1976. Since it's of such historical importance musically, I just wanted to clear that up for others.

— *Tom Stalets*



Ronnie Hawkins and Robbie Robertson in 1976

The world needs more Gary Moore

I noticed one glaring omission from your list of great guitar players from the Nineties [*November 2023*]: Gary Moore. He released his best album, *Still Got the Blues*, in 1990, followed by *After Hours* in 1992 and *Blues for Greeny* in 1995. The solo on "Still Got the Blues" is one of the all-time greats, along with a tone that was beyond compare. I'm disappointed Gary wasn't mentioned in any of the articles. There was plenty of Kurt Cobain praise, which is a joke compared to Gary Moore.

Gary Moore in the early Nineties

Maybe some people have forgotten how great a player he was, but I haven't, and think he deserves some recognition. Feel free to publish this letter. Maybe it will wake up some other people.

— *Mike Warren*

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Milana Suthers

AGE: 18
HOMETOWN: Ravenna, MI
GUITARS: Hollowflake Squier Showmaster, Jackson Rhoads RRX24, Takamine G Series Acoustic/Electric, Ibanez Gio bass
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Black Sabbath "Sweet Leaf," Slayer "Show No Mercy," Pantera "Cowboys from Hell," Extreme "More Than Words"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Boss Katana MKII 50W combo amp

Ady Van Ali

AGE: 60
LOCATION: Sherbrooke, Québec
GUITARS: Kramers, Schecter, Gibson
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Alice Cooper "Halo of Flies" (and his entire catalog) with my band, Aliceson Cooper
GEAR I WANT MOST: Slogans amp, Gibson Les Paul Standard

Richard Godwin

AGE: 17
HOMETOWN: Salisbury, MD
GUITARS: Ibanez Gio, Yamaha acoustic
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Alice in Chains "Nutshell" and "Man in the Box," plus Mad Season "River of Deceit"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Stratocaster, Martin D-28

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ED PERLSTEIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (BAND) IAIN MCKELLY/AVALON/GETTY IMAGES (MOORE)

READER ART

OF THE MONTH

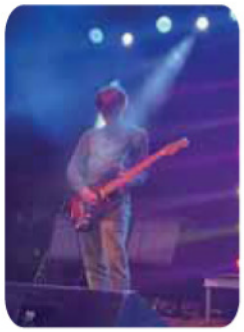
If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com** with a JPG or PDF of the image!

PAUL STANLEY BY DEBBIE RUGGLES

KEITH RICHARDS BY JOHN BEADLE

Steve VanScott

AGE: 66
HOMETOWN: Fairport, NY
GUITARS: Fender Telecaster, Fender acoustic
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Cream "Crossroads," the Rolling Stones "Sympathy for the Devil," Tom Petty "Runnin' Down a Dream," Jimi Hendrix "Little Wing"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Am Pro II Tele, Marshall head w/cab



Graham Earls

AGE: 15
HOMETOWN: Middletown, OH
GUITARS: Fender Stratocaster American Professional II, Fender Telecaster American Professional II
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: John Mayer *Where the Light Is* (live album), plus music by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Pearl Jam
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender JV Modified Stratocaster, Fender American Vintage II 1961 Stratocaster

Cowboy Rick Madwid

AGE: 70
HOMETOWN: Southport, CT
GUITARS: Fender Tele, Fender Strat, Gibson ES-335 12, Gretsch Electromatic, Gibson J45, Martin D-35 1970, Schecter Tele
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: "Big Boss Man," "Carol," "Hoochie Coochie Man," "When a Man Loves a Woman" and "Dancing in the Dark," plus originals, which are on YouTube
GEAR I WANT MOST: Vintage Fender Deluxe, round-neck Dobro, 12-string Rickenbacker

Are you a Defender of the Faith? Send a photo, along with your answers to the questions above, to **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com**. And pray!

TRIPTYCH

THE POWER OF THREE

Pushing the boundaries of vintage Strat tones into uncharted territories of super heavy fuzz-drenched riffing

"For me, the perfect Strat tone has been an ongoing journey for the last few years, and I'm happy to say that the journey has ended with the Triptych single coils"

RABEA MASSAAD

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TUNE-UPS

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"To be able to open for Kiss is going to be unreal," Evan Stanley says. "Music has always been something I share with my dad; it's been a special part of our bond"

PHOTO BY JEN ROSENTSTEIN

Flaming Youth

EVAN STANLEY — AMBER WILD FRONTMAN AND SON OF KISS LEGEND PAUL STANLEY — DIDN'T HEAD DOWN THE GUITAR RABBIT HOLE UNTIL HE DISCOVERED NIRVANA'S "SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT"

By Andrew Daly

CONSIDERING THAT EVAN Stanley grew up watching his dad, Paul Stanley, play guitar in Kiss, most people would assume he's a dyed-in-the-wool disciple of the Hottest Band in the Land. Sure, his dad's exploits influenced him, but there's more to Evan Stanley than kabuki-clad lineage.

"A lot of people think I came out of the womb playing guitar," he tells us. "I've been around it forever because of my dad, and, of course, he was an influence. But the biggest thing was when I went over to a friend's when I was around 10, and he played 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' on a cheap, out-of-tune acoustic. I ran home and said, 'Dad, I need to learn guitar.' He showed me a D and an A chord and said, 'If you remember these in the morning, I'll show you G.' I woke him up at 6 a.m. the next day, showed him the chords, and I was off and running."

From there on, a burning desire to take the stage was stoked in the younger Stanley, leading to the formation of Amber Wild, a band potentially on the cusp of success. Yes, there's work to be done, but Stanley is confident, knowing Amber Wild has rare potential.

"I'm in a great band now where I'm fronting *and* playing guitar, which is like my dad — but the way I got there was *very* different," he says. "The pandemic lifted, and I was like, 'Fuck, I have to get out and play.' I met Tommy [*Lowrey*], the drummer; Jacob [*Massanari*], the bassist; and

Marsh [*Via*], an insane guitarist, and we clicked. We play off against each other in a way not many do. I wanted to bring back that kind of classic guitar exchange."

The early returns on Amber Wild are good. So good that Kiss penciled them in for the final 19 shows of their End of the Road Tour, a chance that Amber Wild intends to savor.

"To be able to open for Kiss is going to be unreal," Stanley says. "We'll connect with as many people as possible. Music has always been something I share with my dad; it's been a special part of our bond. I'm so excited to be a part of this last run. It's a dream come true."

How did Amber Wild get together?
It started during the pandemic when I was looking for an outlet to play live. Being in front of people on stage is a form of connection I can't get enough of. I needed that outlet to express what was happening inside me and express it in a way words can't, and that's when it began.

Tell me about your songwriting process.
The best advice I ever got was, "Treat it like a job." That means I show up every day and write. It doesn't matter if I'm feeling it; I do it every day. But I love playing guitar, so even if I'm having an off day, inspiration will strike. It's easier to capture lightning in a bottle if you don't stop. And the truth is there's no better feeling than cranking my guitar through my Hughes & Kettner amps. They're inspiring because they're packed with cool tones that let me dial in things I've never used before.

"The older I've gotten, the more I realize how special my dad's work is. I was so close to it, so I never understood the scale of it"

I can't help but notice your Rock N Roll Relics Thunders has a leopard print like your dad's B.C. Rich Eagle from the early Eighties. Was his guitar an inspiration?
Let me start by saying Rock N Roll Relics makes the greatest guitars I've played. Better than vintage Gibsons and Fenders, no joke. I've got a silver sparkle on the way, but I love my leopard print one! It's not directly inspired by my dad's, but it's not a coincidence, either. With the world I grew up in, his stuff was around me, so some of it had to sneak in, if only subliminally. I'm a huge Kiss fan. I love glammy stuff; the visual is important because it's a form of expression.

Which of Amber Wild's songs best defines the band?
We just came out of two long rehearsal days, and I brought in this idea, which was cool but was missing something. But as soon as we got in the room together, we banged it out quickly, and it's probably the most balls-out song we have. I love it; it's hooky, punchy and like "guitarmageddon." It's called "Breakout," and we'll release it alongside "Sliver."

Having grown up within the Kiss machine, what does opening for them mean to you?
It's surreal. The older I've gotten, the more I realize how special my dad's work is. I was so close to it, so I never understood the scale of it. But now that I don't live with my dad, I see that Kiss' impact on music and culture is huge. I get to see that firsthand, and I'm very thankful to be a part of it, but the chance to connect with people at this level has me more stoked than ever. I'm ready for it.

MY PEDALBOARD
EVAN STANLEY

WHAT THE AMBER WILD GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

D'ADDARIO TUNER [CT-20 CHROMATIC]
"It's a simple tuner that I grabbed at Guitar Center. I chose it because it's what they had in stock!"

WAY HUGE ORANGER [OP-AMP FUZZ]
"The best fuzz I've heard. It's reactive, can roll off and gives perfect edge frizz. When I roll it up, it's saturated, sustained and clear."

KEELEY OXBLOOD [OVERDRIVE]
"I have the EQ dialed so it's great for solos. It's got a nice high roll-off where I get a lot of bite but no harshness."

WAY HUGE ECHO-PUSS [ANALOG DELAY]
"I mostly use this during solos. It's beautiful and musical sounding, making every lead sound better."

JEN ROSENSTEIN (STANLEY) COURTESY OF EVAN STANLEY (BOARD)

Girlschool's Jackie Chambers [*left*] and Kim McAuliffe do their thing in Barcelona in 2016

5 FIVE QUESTIONS

GIRLSCHOOL

WHY GUITAR IS MORE FUN THAN EVER FOR THE U.K. ROCKERS — 45 YEARS AFTER THEIR BIG BREAKTHROUGH

By Mark McStea

IT'S BEEN A long time since U.K. rockers Girlschool broke the mold to become the first British all-female metal band to hit the big time — 45 years, in fact, as reflected in the title of their powerhouse new album, *WTFortyfive*. Founding member and singer/guitarist Kim McAuliffe and "the new girl" — lead guitarist Jackie Chambers (who joined the band in 1999) — are stoked to be talking to *Guitar World* this far down the line.

It's been eight years since *Guilty As Sin*, your last album. Why the gap?

KIM McAULIFFE: Time just goes by so quickly that it only feels like about three years since the last record. Covid took a couple of years out in the middle, but I suppose we were just carrying on touring until the record company said it's about time you made a new album. [*Laughs*]

The title, *WTFortyfive*, says it all, I guess. Do you still feel the same excitement 45 years down the line?

JACKIE CHAMBERS: I'm more excited and enthusiastic about playing than I ever was. The thrill never dies; music keeps you young.

McAULIFFE: Yeah, age is irrelevant. I feel the same fire and passion as I always did. I refuse to accept that the years have passed, I guess. If you enjoy your "job," then it isn't really a job, is it? It's a way of life.

***WTFortyfive* is definitely a strong album. I assume you're pleased with it?**

McAULIFFE: Totally delighted. I don't like going into the studio because I'm a perfectionist, but I'm relieved it turned out so well. I actually really like it.

CHAMBERS: We did it so fast as well. I think it was about two weeks, but the energy was amazing when we were getting it down. It was all about the feel rather than being too precious about things. We wrote the songs so quickly.

What's your go-to gear these days?

McAULIFFE: It's always Marshall for me; I've still got our original Marshall stacks from when we started. Guitar-wise, it's always Gibsons — SGs and particularly the Goddess, which they don't make anymore.

> **"It really makes me stop and think; when I was growing up, I think there was only Suzi Quatro to look up to"**

They should bring it back; it's much lighter and perfectly formed. I'm available if they want to make a signature model!

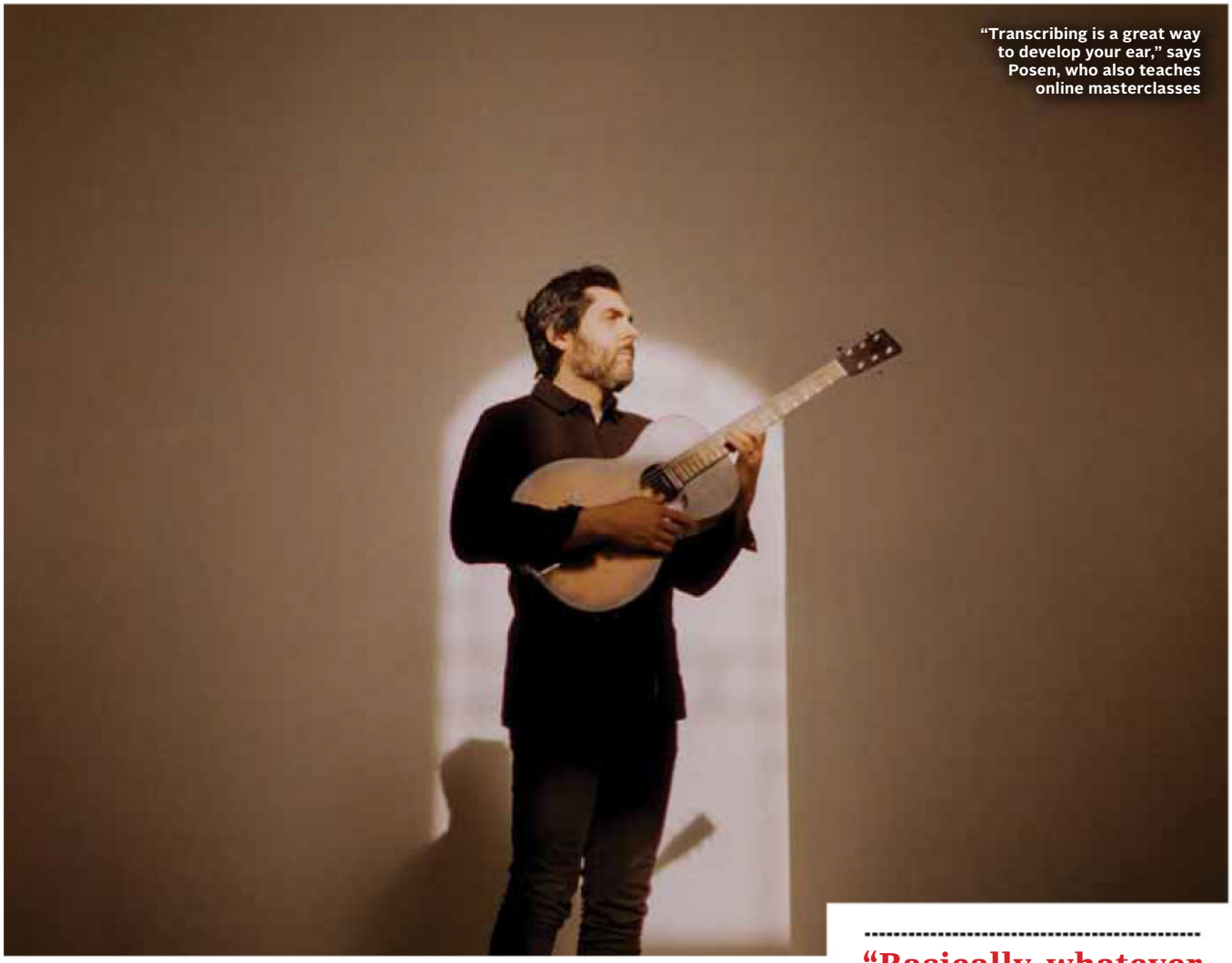
CHAMBERS: My favorite guitar is a custom-made Chandler that I got about 30 years ago, and I've just signed a deal with U.K. makers Gordon Smith Guitars.

When you look at how things have changed since you started, it must be satisfying that it's no longer a big deal to be a woman in rock — and playing guitar, for that matter.

CHAMBERS: That's one of the nicest things. Wherever we travel, we get people saying how important we were in terms of influencing them. It really makes me stop and think; when I was growing up, I think there was only Suzi Quatro to look up to.

McAULIFFE: We're often amazed by the people who've told us how influential we were on them getting into playing music, and that's maybe the most satisfying thing about sticking around for 45 years! [*Laughs*]

XAVI TORRENT/REDFERNS



"Transcribing is a great way to develop your ear," says Posen, who also teaches online masterclasses

Ariel Posen

"QUALITY OVER QUANTITY" IS THE DRIVING FORCE THAT SHAPES THIS CANADIAN TRIPLE-THREAT'S EMOTIVE, MINIMALIST STYLE

By Bill DeMain

"Basically, whatever everybody else is doing, I try to run away from"

ARIEL POSEN BELIEVES in a unified field theory of music.

"Playing the guitar is not what I do, it's just a part of me," he says. "And I think my playing — and singing and writing — represents me as a person very well. I'm an understated guy. I try not to talk too much. When I do say something, there should be meaning and value there."

This approach has been at the heart of Posen's sound since his solo debut in 2019, and it reaches a new plateau on his third album, *Reasons Why*. Standout tracks like "I Wish That We'd Never Met" and "Broken But I'm Fine" radiate a lean and soulful elegance, with lyrics that explore the vagaries of the heart. And whether he's conjuring cumulonimbus textures in a dreamy soundscape or just peeling off quavering slide licks, there's never a wasted note.

Posen, the son of klezmer musician parents, started gigging around Winnipeg on his own at 14. But he says the "gateway that opened the door" to his future was hearing Stevie Ray Vaughan. "He was so aggressive and powerful," Posen says. "It was the first time I thought, 'I want to do that.' Not what Stevie Ray did, but being a more serious, sophisticated guitarist." That led to "my 10,000 hours of practice" and much dissecting of solos from across the musical spectrum, from Charlie Parker to Jaco Pastorius to Kevin Breit (a fellow Canadian whose slide work Posen says "turned my head around").

"Transcribing is a great way to develop your ear," says Posen, who's also an inspiring teacher of online masterclasses. "But instead of just saying, 'Okay, I can play this thing I like now,' I thought, 'Let me break it down on the harmony level and figure out how I can use the information in different ways any time I want. That kind of thinking helped open my mind as a musician."

Though Posen considers gear as "tools to get the music out," his choices reflect a connoisseur's palate — custom-built guitars from Mule, Case and Kithara, favorite pedals like the Chase Bliss Thermae and Tonal Recall Analog Delay, and Two-Rock Traditional Clean amps. "I'm trying to chase a sound that I'm hearing in my head and do it in an authentic way," Posen says. "And basically, whatever everybody else is doing, I try to run away from."

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LOST CLASSICS: Buzzcocks

GUITARIST STEVE DIGGLE WALKS US THROUGH THE MAKING OF THE BAND'S DEBUT ALBUM, 1978'S *ANOTHER MUSIC IN A DIFFERENT KITCHEN*

By Mark McStea

ALTHOUGH THE U.K. punk explosion of 1976 was initially a very London-centric phenomenon, Buzzcocks — from Manchester in the north of England — were actually one of the very first bands to release a single, "Spiral Scratch," on their own New Hormones label. But they were pacesetters in a number of ways. Singer Pete Shelley (who passed away in 2018) actually booked the Sex Pistols to play an early show in Manchester. The audience for that event, according to legend, included several Mancunians who went on to form significant bands, including Morrissey from the Smiths, the Cult's Billy Duffy and members of New Order. Buzzcocks bucked the trend, eschewing bleak nihilism for melody-laden, instant pop classics that saw them score numerous chart successes.

Their debut album, 1978's *Another Music in a Different Kitchen*, has long been revered as one of the seminal albums of the punk canon. Below, guitarist Steve Diggle looks back on how the band created this timeless — yet arguably lost — classic.

[*from left*] **Buzzcocks' John Maher, Steve Diggle, Pete Shelley and Steve Garvey**

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS

Buzzcocks were fantastically productive. In 1978 alone you released two albums and five singles. How did you decide what to record for the album with so much material to choose from?

The songs seemed to automatically suggest themselves. They were the best collection of songs we had on hand. We just went in, recorded the tracks that ended up on the album, and no more. There was no unused material. We'd been playing those songs live for quite a while anyway. We'd recorded "Moving Away from the Pulsebeat" for a BBC John Peel session, but I hadn't really figured out what I wanted to do with my guitar parts at that time.

How long did it take to make the album?

About three weeks. We recorded it at Olympic Studios, which has been the scene of numerous legendary recordings, so that was a buzz for the band. I had the Rolling Stones album *High Tide and Green Grass*, and there were pictures of the band in the studio on the back of the album sleeve, which really stopped me in my tracks — to think who'd been there before us, including the likes of the Who and Led Zep.

Did you do many takes of each song?
We just did three takes of each track — we recorded them in the same sequence that they appeared on the record — and then decided afterwards which was the best version. Then we'd put any overdubs or whatever on that version. There was no great overthinking or anything.

What were the guitars and amps that you and Pete Shelley used?
I had a 1959 Les Paul TV Junior that used to belonged to Tony Hicks from the Hollies; when I was in the studio, amazingly, Tony popped in with Kenny Lynch [*writer of hits for Sixties bands including the Small Faces*]. He said, "That's my guitar," and I thought, "Fuck me, I've bought a stolen guitar!" [*Laughs*] Anyway, he just meant that he'd sold it to the shop, but he really regretted that he'd sold it. [*Laughs*] Pete had a Gordon Smith, which was a Manchester-based independent company. Their guitars were based on Gibsons. We both used HH 2x12 100-watt combos. They were fantastic amps that a lot of people used in the U.K. in the late Seventies; Wilko Johnson from Dr. Feelgood was a notable user. They were transistor [*amps*] but had a built-in "valve sound" switch that was really effective. I've still got that amp, which has survived numerous house moves. I used it on the last Buzzcocks album [*2022's* Sonics in the Soul]. The main recording space was a pretty big hall, so it looked funny to see our two small combos set up in this large space. I think we had an Eventide Harmonizer on the guitar parts and also on the vocals for most of the songs.

How did you work out the guitar parts between the two guitarists?
It just depended on who came up with something. There was no real set formula, and often when we were both playing rhythm we'd play the same chord inversions, but something about the way they played against each other made our sound what it was. Maybe it was almost like an in and out of phase effect, as we weren't totally locked in together. We came up with ideas for the overdubs once we'd got our backing track agreed on. We'd just come up with some things on the spot, even though we'd been playing a version of the song live. I always found it very easy to come up with riffs and ideas. For "Autonomy," I think we played the ascending riff together, but then Pete came up with the ascending guitar solo over the riff. There were no egos about who'd play a riff or a solo, just who came up with what worked. It seemed like the first things we came up with were always the very things that worked perfectly. [*Laughs*] Something magical seemed to happen when we played together, and that was the sound of the Buzzcocks.

Martin Rushent, who was very much in demand, produced the record. How did that process work?
He was very easy to get on with. It really was a matter of playing the songs for him as we went along — there was no pre-production phase or anything. He seemed to like everything that we'd planned to record, and it went really smoothly. We were so tight as a band anyway that we rocketed through the songs. Doug Bennett was a great engineer who worked there, and he was very helpful too. It already sounded great because of what Doug had done anyway, and Martin just kind of steered the ship slightly after Doug's initial work.

"Tony Hicks from the Hollies popped in and said, 'That's my guitar,' and I thought, 'F* me, I've bought a stolen guitar!'"**

Who were your guitar influences — and who influenced Pete?
The Beatles, Stones, Kinks and the Who were big influences for me and Pete; he had Bowie and the Velvet Underground in there as well. Oh, and the Stooges and MC5 were big for us. Jimmy Page's soloing and riffs were a huge influence on me, which was probably not the thing that you could really talk about too much back in 1976. [*Laughs*] I loved John Lennon's guitar playing.

A lot of your songs were under three minutes. Did you feel it was hard to get enough songs for a full set?
It did feel like we had to play a ton of songs, and the other problem was that when we played them live, we played them a lot faster than the record, so the set would be over, and we'd be thinking we'd only just got started. [*Laughs*] We'd play about 18 songs in 45 minutes, but they were the length they needed to be — any longer would have ruined them.

"I Don't Mind" clearly sounds like the obvious hit single. Did it get more work to sound that way?
I agree that it did sound like the obvious choice for a single, but in fact it didn't receive any extra treatment or production when we recorded it. The record company picked that to be the single after we gave them the album. We didn't intend for any of the tracks to be released as a single; that wasn't what we normally did as we wanted to give our fans maximum value for money, which is why so many of our singles were stand-alone songs that didn't feature on an album. We were writing so many songs that we didn't feel any need to ration them out.

"I Need" has a Ramones feel.
We'd just been in the pub before we recorded that one and we were feeling like we really wanted to have something that just fucking rocked on a bit. [*Laughs*] We started playing it, and I didn't have all the words with me, and Pete came up with some lines which in effect took it from being a political statement of what *I* needed, to a love song. [*Laughs*]

"Moving Away from the Pulsebeat" is something of an epic, isn't it?
That was something that I think was uniquely us at the time. We closed our live shows with it, and I remember Mick Jones from the Clash saying that only the Buzzcocks could get away with finishing a live set with that one. There's almost a drum solo in it, which was probably the ultimate taboo in the punk age. The guitar parts were very much off the cuff; I think of it as almost an *avant garde* punk approach. [*Laughs*] There was a Bo Diddley rhythm going, and I couldn't quite hear what Pete was doing on the rhythm guitar when I was putting down the single-note lines, so that was almost a happy accident the way that it naturally evolved.

Were you happy with how it turned out back then, and how do you view it now?
We were very happy with everything about it, from the way that it sounded to the way it was packaged. I think it seems timeless, like it could have been recorded this year. It doesn't have anything that dates it in terms of studio or guitar effects, and the subject material — relationships and personal politics or whatever you want to call it — remains as relevant today as it always was. The fact that so much of it was effectively recorded live is a big part of its success.

What's coming up?
We're making a new album soon, which I think might be an eye-opener for fans. It's maybe a little more experimental than what people might expect, although there will still be a big focus on songs. That's always been the trademark of the Buzzcocks — a great song that sticks in your head after one hearing.

The 'Klok Strikes *IV*

WHICH FICTIONAL BAND WOULD WIN IN A FIGHT — DETHKLOK, GORILLAZ OR THE ARCHIES? LET'S JUST SAY DETHKLOK MASTERMIND BRENDON SMALL HAS SOME OPINIONS...

By Joe Bosso

IN THE UNLIKELY event that two of the world's greatest fictional bands — the extreme heavy metal outfit Dethklok and the hip-hop virtual group Gorillaz — should ever mix it up in a parking lot brawl, Dethklok's main man Brendon Small is confident that his fearsome five piece would prevail. "Gorillaz don't stand a chance," he says with a laugh. "My initial description of Dethklok was, 'They smell bad and they can hurt you.' I like Gorillaz a lot, but I don't think they have anything on Dethklok in the crazy department."

Considering a more implausible hypothetical matchup, this one between Dethklok and perhaps history's most-famous fictional band — the straight-laced, ear candy-dispensing Archies — Small also gives his metal bruisers the advantage over Riverdale's finest. "It might not even be a fair fight," he says. "Dethklok have a lot of power in their frontman, Nathan Explosion. The Archies are clean-cut, and they would try to avoid a fight, whereas Dethklok are insane."

Small is the creator of the Adult Swim animated series *Metalocalypse* that chronicles the exploits of Dethklok, "the world's most successful death metal band." As writer and director of the show, Small — a guitarist since age 15 — has also composed and performed the music featured in the series, which has been released on four albums (*Dethalbum I*, *II* and *III*, as well as *The Doomstar Requiem*). When *Metalocalypse* was canceled in 2013 after a four-season run, Small figured that Dethklock's career had come to an end, but now he's put the band back together for a full-length movie titled *Metalocalypse: Army of the Doomstar*, available for streaming on Hulu and on Blu-ray. What's more, there are two new albums (*Dethalbum IV* and the movie's soundtrack) recorded by Small and drummer Gene Hoglan, best known for his work with Dark Angel, Testament and Fear Factory.

"It's been a pretty strange ride, thinking that the show and the band were over to now doing a movie and two albums," Small says. "The fact is, I had a large part of the story that I wanted to wrap up, so when the opportunity presented itself, I said yes immediately."

As he's done in years past, Small is taking a real-life incarnation of Dethklok on the road. His live band includes Hoglan as well as virtuoso session/touring guitarist Nili Brosh. While he preps for the tour, the multi-talented writer, director and musician chatted about his past and present with *Guitar World*.

In the series, Dethklok's "billions" of fans frequently risk their lives traveling to dangerous locations to see the band live. Your real-life fans have it pretty easy, don't they?

In the show, the fans are almost sacrificial lambs. They even have to sign a death waiver to be able to reach the places where the band plays. It's almost bizarre, this concept of the band hating their fans and chastising them. It's an exaggeration of real-life situations where you have fans getting crushed at concerts, or crazy things like Altamont. In real life, our fans can feel very safe, and we're thrilled to have them.

What's the most dangerous place you've ever played?

I flew to a gig in a helicopter once. It was for the time we played on an aircraft carrier at Comic Con in San Diego. They played this Wagnerian suite as we were landing; that seemed appropriate.

Let's talk about your guitar playing. Who got you started? Were you always a metal dude?

It all starts with Reb Beach. [*Laughs*] No, seriously, he did an instructional video that I watched and practiced to a lot. I was a typical kid in the suburbs. Eddie

PROVIDED/PR (DETHKLOK) SCOTT DUDELSON/GETTY IMAGES (SMALL)

The Dethklok crew in 2023 and [*right*] Brendon Small in 2019. "It's been a pretty strange ride, thinking the show and the band were over to now doing a movie and two albums," Small says

Van Halen was on TV, and it was a great time to be alive. I was a fairly lame guitarist at first, but my family moved and our next-door neighbor was a guitar player. He said, "Let's get you going." He showed me chords, and he taught me about all the bands. He played me *Led Zeppelin IV*. He introduced me to Metallica and Slayer. I was off and running. Then I got the videos. A bunch of us traded tapes of Michael Angelo Batio, Steve Lukather, Reb Beach — anything that was out. We had our cheap guitars and amps, but we went for it.

Did you have a bunch of crummy teenage bands?
I did, but I had stage fright. I wasn't ready to perform for people. I failed anytime I tried to play in front of anyone. It wasn't until I tried stand-up comedy that I was able to overcome my fear of live performance.

You studied music at Berklee at the same time you started doing live comedy. Did you have any kind of career plan?
I didn't know what I should do at first — comedy or music. I had gone to Berklee, but I also studied writing at Emerson College, so I had the music and the comedy writing things going on. Getting on stage and doing comedy helped big time. There were years of experimenting. After a while, I set out to put comedy and music together.

"I'm hoping to sit down with Nili Brosh so I can say, 'Show me the good stuff. Give me some licks.' She's a monster guitarist"

You're a pretty serious shredder. What kind of practice routine do you follow?
It depends on what I'm working on. What I do is, I have a metronome on my phone, so I run scales. I work a lot on my right arm and hand, getting them positioned for a great rhythm flow, doing up and down scales. I'm pretty diligent. I do it slow, then fast. The hard part is doing it while I'm singing, but I'm in a good zone. I also work on nerdy jazz stuff. Whatever I can do to bring in something new, I'll give it a shot.

Over the years, you've introduced a few signature guitars through Gibson and Epiphone. Your most recent is the Epiphone GhostHorse Explorer.
That's right — the GhostHorse came out during the pandemic. I wanted to do something new with an Explorer shape while remaining true to the original. This one is 24 frets, and I added a Floyd Rose. I made the cutaway deeper, so I get total access to each fret. It's an added level of expression.

Nili Brosh plays live with you guys. Has she schooled you on any of her shred licks?
She certainly knows them. Most of the time we're trying to figure out how to play three-part harmonies with two guitars, so we're usually concentrating on Dethklok material. But I'm hoping to sit down with her so I can say, "Show me the good stuff. Give me some licks." She's a monster guitarist — great feel and tone. I think she fits in perfectly with this world.

Do you get in character when you record the studio material?
I do! [*Laughs*] I think, "Who is Skwisgaar Skwigelf? What would he do?" There's two guitarists in the show, but I think about Skwisgaar because he's the lead guitarist. I go on long walks, put on my earphones and listen to Yngwie Malmsteen's *Rising Force*. That gets me pumped up to get into Skwisgaar. And I think about Van Halen a lot. I have to play some treacherous licks, so I need the right kind of inspiration. What I'm doing is overplaying to some extent; it's gotta be huge and bombastic. That's the trick — playing something melodic yet over-the-top difficult.

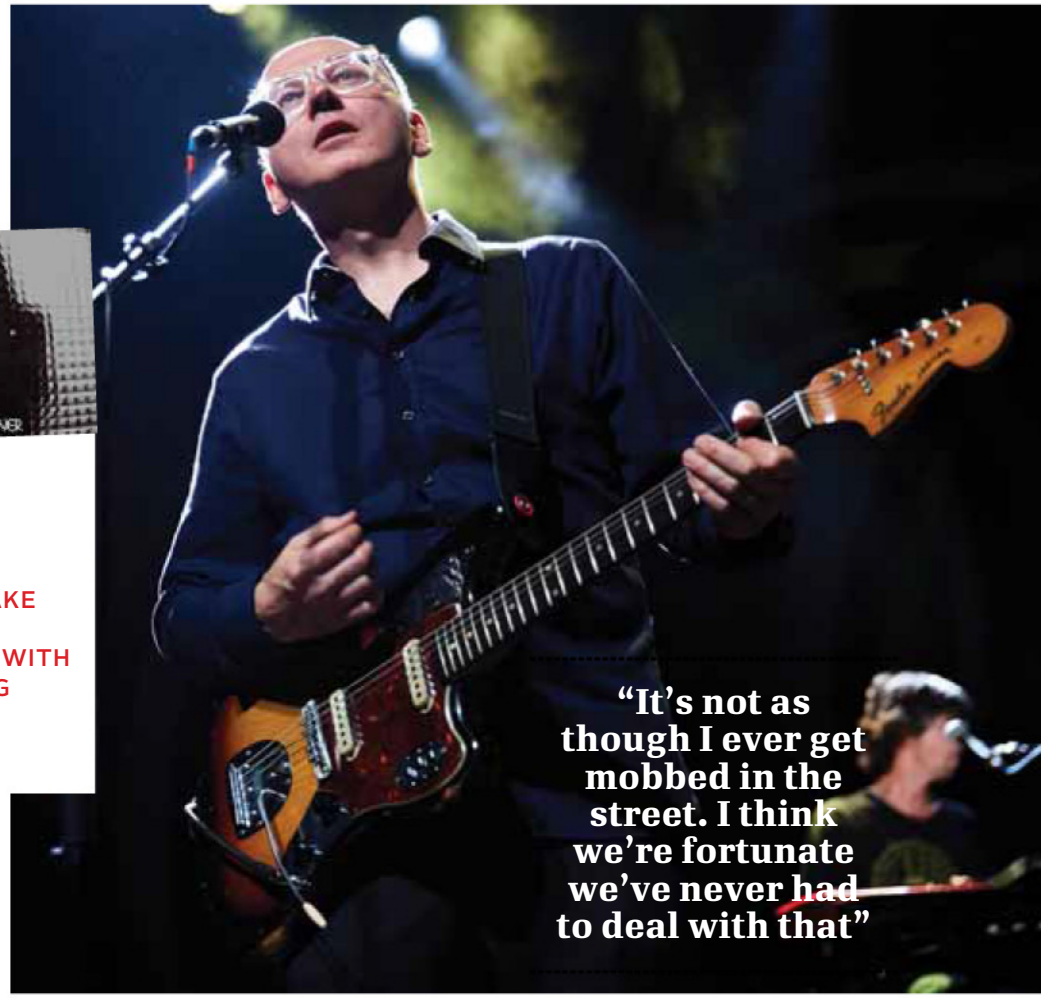
You've had incredible talents from the worlds of acting and music provide voices for the show. The movie isn't lacking for big-time names.
We've got some amazing people — King Diamond, Scott Ian, Amy Lee from Evanescence, Kirk Hammett — the list goes on. And we've got great actors like Jon Hamm, Mark Hammill and even Malcolm McDowell. We were so lucky that everybody said yes. They all add such gravitas to the film.

From the comedy world, Marc Maron has done one of the voices for the show. He's a pretty solid guitarist. Ever jammed with him?
I have jammed with him. I used to do a comedy and music show at the Baked Potato. We would do a lot of cool jams. Marc is a great guitarist. He's got the vibrato and the attack, all that Albert King stuff. The guy can jam.

Welcome to the Club

TEENAGE FANCLUB'S NORMAN BLAKE AND RAYMOND McGINLEY DISCUSS MORTALITY, ENJOYING ICE CREAM WITH NIRVANA AND THE MIXED BLESSING OF NEVER QUITE HITTING IT HUGE

By Jon Wiederhorn



BURAK CINGI/REDFERNS (MCGINLEY) PER OLE HAGEN/REDFERNS (BLAKE)

THERE WAS A time at the dawn of the alternative rock explosion when Scottish quartet Teenage Fanclub seemed destined for rock stardom. They toured with Nirvana, performed on *Saturday Night Live*, and *Spin* rated *Bandwagonesque* as the best album of 1991, ahead of Nirvana and R.E.M. Suddenly, every media outlet wanted a piece of the bedraggled, jangly rockers, who were touted as alt-rock saviors.

"It was a really exciting time for us," says guitarist and vocalist Norman Blake. "We got to tour the world and play these amazing places. We played a huge venue in Stockholm, and after Nirvana's soundcheck we left with them and found a little play park. We all bought ice cream cones and ate them sitting on this swing set. That was really memorable because in the middle of all this craziness, we had this private, innocent moment with these nice, friendly people from America."

Critics and alt-rock purists embraced Teenage Fanclub, but *Bandwagonesque* was ultimately a sales disappointment for the record company, which hoped it would be platinum within a few months. For Teenage Fanclub, however, the album allowed them to keep playing shows and recording music, which was all they had ever strived for.

"I've always felt we've been quite lucky," says lead guitarist and vocalist Raymond McGinley. "Maybe a lot of people see us as a band that should've been more successful. But that's not a bad perception to have because it means they think you're good and you didn't get what you deserved. In our minds, we never expected to go platinum. That was never a goal. We've gotten to be a band for 34 years and make a living doing it — and we're still going."

"We never went into this band with any expectations, so as a consequence of that we've never been disappointed," Blake adds. "There are endless accounts of people saying, 'Well, if the record company had done this or that, they would have been huge.' But we've never thought that way. We just love making music together."

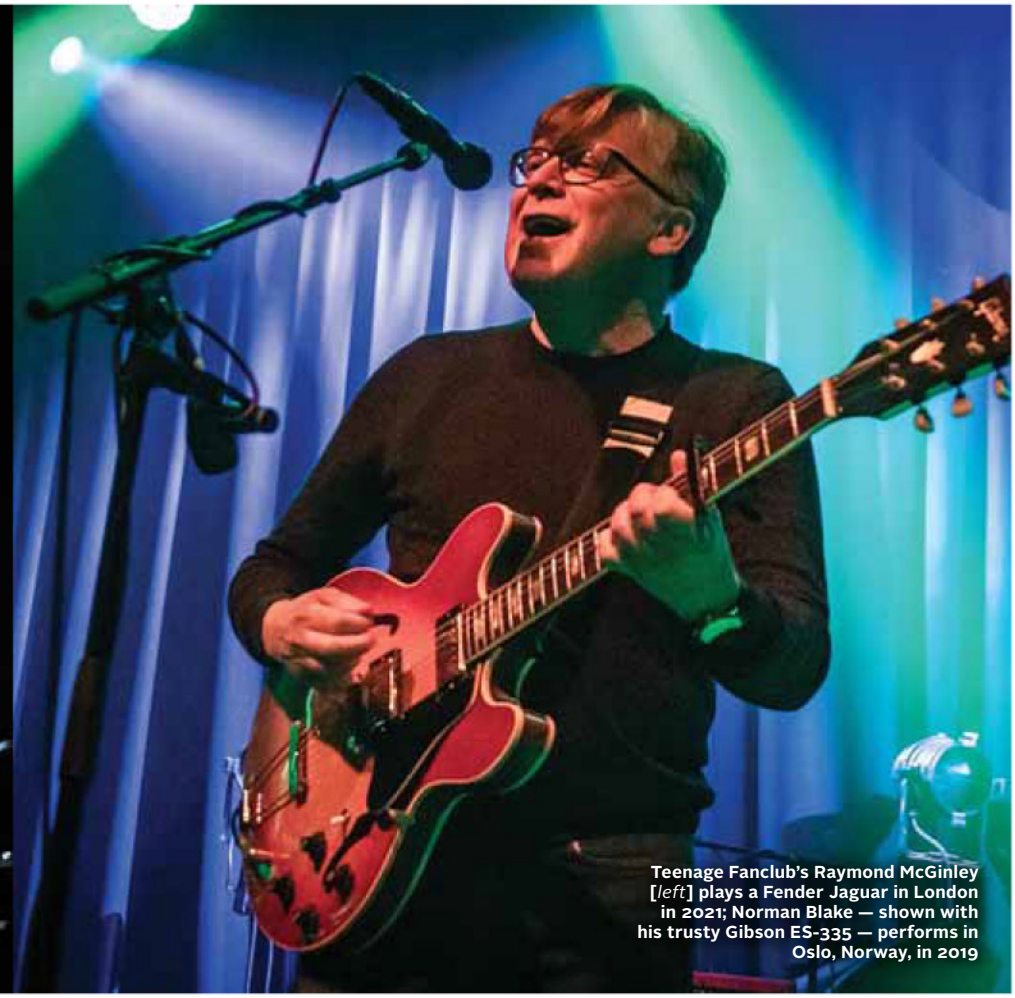
Teenage Fanclub's positivity and sustained enthusiasm for their craft has been the key to their survival and cult-level success. Since the release of *Bandwagonesque*, they've released 10 studio albums, including the new euphorically tuneful, yet melancholic *Nothing Lasts Forever*.

The follow-up to 2021's *Endless Arcade* (their first recording since the 2018 departure of bassist and founding member Gerard Love), *Nothing Lasts Forever* is winsomely jangly and mid-paced — a cross between the Byrds; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; the Band; the Beatles, and, yes, Big Star, the band Teenage Fanclub were mercilessly accused of aping in the early Nineties. It was a critique that provided smack-talkers grist for the mill. For Blake and McGinley, however, being compared to Big Star was both a compliment and an opportunity.

"When we did press, we were actually quite open about all of our influences, whether it was the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Neil Young or whatever," McGinley says. "And then we'd mention Big Star, and I think a lot of journalists had never heard of Big Star, so people hooked onto that and used it as an angle to say, 'Oh, it's the band that loves Big Star!' But it was flattering to be compared to Big Star because their music is so good, and it gave us the opportunity to meet Alex in New Orleans the first time we played there. We got along really well and became friends and even got to work with him."

Although Blake and McGinley are content with their new songs and pleased with their current lineup — which includes keyboardist and former bassist David McGowan, drummer Francis Macdonald and keyboardist Euros Childs (ex-Gorky's Zygotic Mynki) — they admit they started working on *Nothing Lasts Forever* before they were really ready to enter the studio. Like countless other bands, Teenage Fanclub were planning to embark on a lengthy tour when the pandemic put their plans on hold.

"When *Endless Arcade* was released, it



Teenage Fanclub's Raymond McGinley [*left*] plays a Fender Jaguar in London in 2021; Norman Blake — shown with his trusty Gibson ES-335 — performs in Oslo, Norway, in 2019

was kind of like going back to 1990 when the first album, [*the grunge-inflected* A Catholic Education] came out. We couldn't really do anything with it. Everything came to a screeching halt. We were all a bit depressed about that. I mean, there was a lot to be depressed about at that time, but it just felt really weird."

"There was this buildup and then the release, and then nothing," Blake adds. "I think that's where the idea for the theme of *Nothing Lasts Forever* started because nothing was happening, and it seemed like everything was ending. Also, it was a line in *Endless Arcade* and we're always looking for ways to tie things together. But we felt like we needed to do something, so we said, 'Right, well, let's make another album.'"

Holed up at home, Blake and McGinley wrote a batch of new songs sans vocal melodies and showed them to the rest of the band. Then, instead of recording pre-production demos (which they've never done), Teenage Fanclub fine-tuned the songs, added vocals, and then headed to Rockfield Studios in Wales, where they finished the lyrics and tracked *Nothing Lasts Forever*.

"We had the title, so that lent itself to a bit of reflection, at least with the lyrics," McGinley says. "We're not saying this is our last album. We sure hope it's not. But bands don't last forever. People don't last forever. Nothing lasts forever. After 34 years in a band, you have to accept that we're not a conveyer belt and we're not machines. Anything can end at any time, and maybe that provides motivation to keep going."

Not only do Teenage Fanclub plan to keep going, from now on they plan to release a new record every year or two, instead of waiting a half-decade, as they've sometimes done in the past. "That's the way Yo La Tengo do it, and it seems to work well for them," Blake says. "That's really about as fast as you can do albums these days because there's a bit of backlog waiting for vinyl, and then you'll go on tour for six or seven months. So, two years sounds about right."

Whether opening for an arena band or rocking a dive bar, Teenage Fanclub's setup has always been the same. McGinley plays a 1973 pre-CBS Fender Jaguar and Blake uses a 1970 Gibson ES-335 and a Martin acoustic. Both have boost pedals and play Vox AC15s onstage. In the studio, Blake and McGinley have relied on an old Epiphone Casino and a late-1950s Fender Deluxe for decades.

And while their sound has changed slightly with each album, they've relied on the same approach since the first time they entered the studio back in 1990. McGinley tackles all the leads and Blake sometimes joins him for guitar harmonies. For the rhythms, McGinley plays mostly open chords and chord fragments with very little gain, and Blake compliments the riffs with chord inversions, using a capo and setting his distortion higher to create a denser sound.

"Norman mostly plays all six strings all the time," McGinley says. "I like to play a few strings at a time and arpeggios, but we mix it up as long as the two guitars sound complementary, but different."

While Teenage Fanclub were picked up by Geffen/DGC after only one record, they never expected to retain the support of a major label for too long. After their fourth big-budget release, 1997's *Songs from Northern Britain*, their U.S. label dropped them due to poor sales. It was a mixed blessing. Being out of the major-label shark pool meant less pressure to shift units. It also meant less money to record and less tour support. Even so, they were handpicked by Radiohead to open their *OK Computer* tour, but the shows only reinforced the notion that fame comes at a price.

"It was amazing, and we had a good time hanging out with the guys, but we noticed that everywhere Radiohead went, people followed them," Blake says. "We saw the same thing with Nirvana years earlier. If you're very successful, it's impossible to have private space, and I can see how that would be difficult to deal with. If I'm walking around Glasgow I may be recognized by a couple of people, but it's not as though I ever get mobbed in the street. I think we're fortunate that we've never had to deal with that."

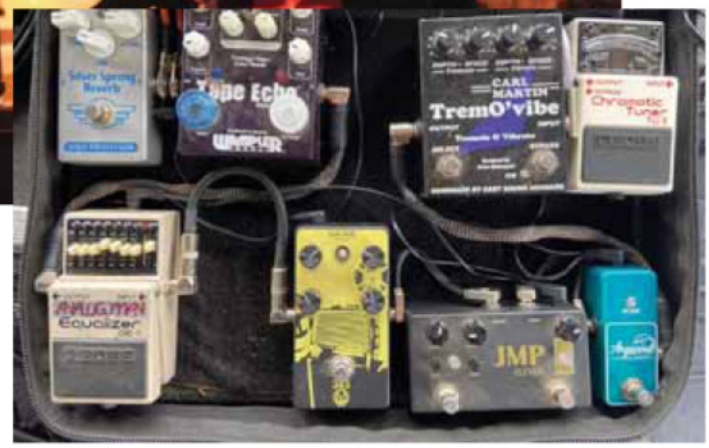
Following the 2003 compilation CD, *Four Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Six Seconds – A Short Cut to Teenage Fanclub*, the band started recording albums on their own and licensing them through independent labels, including Merge in the U.S. and Norman Records/Pema in Europe. From 2005's *Man-Made* to the present, Teenage Fanclub have covered all their recording and studio expenses, ensuring no one will interfere with their music or artwork.

"Having worked with labels and done records on our own, we've discovered it's much better for us to do it ourselves," Blake says. "We've been at this for a long time, so we kind of know what we're doing. We'll get the artwork and music together and present it to whoever's interested with the finished project. Then it's, 'Well, here it is. Let us know if you're interested.'"

LEO QUAN
BADASS
BRIDGES
ARE BACK!
SCAN ME

Laur Joamets in action with Drivin' N Cryin' in Birmingham, Alabama, February 22, 2018

DAVID A. SMITH/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT) COURTESY OF LAUR JOAMETS (BELOW)



MY PEDALBOARD
LAUR JOAMETS

WHAT THE FORMER STURGILL SIMPSON AND CURRENT LORE AND DRIVIN' & CRYIN' MAN SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

"I USED TO travel with a couple of pedalboards, and I'd switch when I'd go from my band, Lore, to Drivin' & Cryin'. Then I had this epiphany that since I already had a board I was comfortable with that I'd been using with Drivin' & Cryin', I'd simplify it to just one board. I was spending too much time thinking about what I'd be using between the two sets when I should've just been thinking about what the fuck I was playing. Having one board makes for less anxiety and lets me focus on what matters most.

"It starts with a Boss Chromatic Tuner; then I've got this great pedal called a [*Carl Martin*] TremO'Vibe, which combines tremolo and vibrato. From there, I've got my octave pedal [*Argonaut*] by Mythos Pedals. After that, there's the JMP Eleven [*Lovepedal*], which gives me that great tube amp sound and a lot of drive for when I need it. The JMP Eleven goes into my Walrus Audio [*385*] Overdrive, which runs into my Analog Man Boss Equalizer [*GE-7*], which is excellent for reducing noise and clearing things up. Then I have a Wampler Pedals [*Faux*] Tape Echo Delay [*v2*], which goes into my Silver Spring Reverb by Mad Professor."

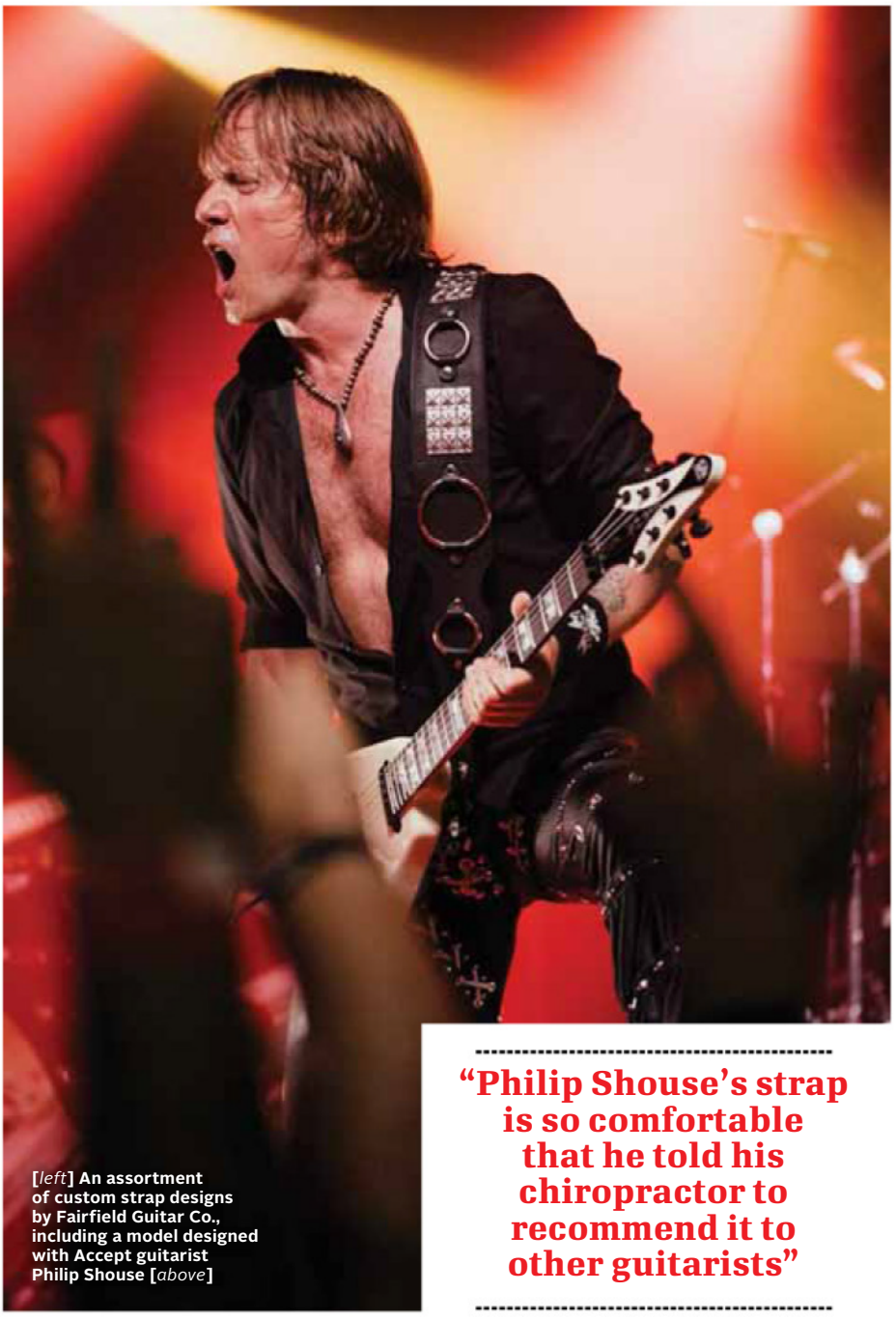
> **"Having one board makes for less anxiety and lets me focus on what matters most"**

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:
"Aside from my Boss Tuner, I'd probably go with some kind of boost or drive pedal. It would be something that would give me a bit more volume and gain. I guess I'd go with the Walrus Audio overdrive pedal."

Fairfield Guitar Co.

ROB CAGGIANO, BEN COTE, FRANKIE LINDIA AND PHILIP SHOUSE COLLABORATE WITH FAIRFIELD ON ARTIST SIGNATURE STRAPS THAT UNIQUELY ADDRESS GUITARISTS' NEEDS

By Chris Gill



[*left*] An assortment of custom strap designs by Fairfield Guitar Co., including a model designed with Accept guitarist Philip Shouse [*above*]

"Philip Shouse's strap is so comfortable that he told his chiropractor to recommend it to other guitarists"

ARTIST SIGNATURE GUITARS, amps and pedals designed in collaboration with guitarists are common these days. However, Fairfield Guitar Co. (fairfieldguitarco.com) might be the only company that offers artist guitar straps designed with similar input and attention to detail. Earlier this year Fairfield Guitar Co. released a trio of custom straps designed with Ben Cote (the Ben Cote Band), Frankie Lindia (Atomic Punks, David Lee Roth, Ratt) and Philip Shouse (Accept, Ace Frehley) that prove that there's much more to guitar strap design than cool looks.

"Who better to instruct me about designing a strap than someone who is using one constantly on tour?" says Fairfield's Louis Costa. "I work for a men's clothing company and started making straps for friends during Covid. I eventually got my straps into the hands of some artists, and it snowballed from there."

Costa asked players what they really needed from a guitar strap. "They all have a vision of what is important to them," he says. "Philip said he needed something wide and comfortable. His strap is so comfortable that he told his chiropractor to recommend it to other guitarists. Ben Cote wanted an Eighties-themed strap that was cool looking — he was less concerned about comfort. He's young so he doesn't know about backaches yet. Frankie likes to take his shirt off while he plays, so he wanted a strap that felt smooth against his body. He also wanted a bottle opener on his strap, which is something every guitarist needs whether they know it or not!"

Costa recently added Volbeat guitarist Rob Caggiano to his growing roster. "Rob wanted something that is easily adjustable. He wears his guitars high at the beginning of a tour, but as the tour progresses he wears his guitars lower and lower. He wanted to easily adjust the strap's length without having to constantly remove and remount his wireless transmitter."

Fairfield Guitar Co. straps are built to last and endure constant use and abuse on stage. The artist straps are all limited-edition offerings made from the highest quality materials, yet the prices are reasonable and comparable to those of other quality straps.

"I've worked with leather and fabric for many years in my 'day job' and played guitar for 36 years," Costa says. "You have to do something for a while to be able to get things right. Making straps started as a side passion, but it's turning into a business. Every artist I've worked with has approached their designs with similar passion, and hopefully that translates to something other people will want too."

FAIRFIELD GUITAR CO.

End Reign

HOW DOMENIC ROMEO'S BLAZING NEW PROJECT BENEFITS FROM TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SHREDDING STYLES

By Gregory Adams

DOMENIC ROMEO UNEARTHS molten metal leads aplenty on *The Way of All Flesh Is Decay*, the scorched-earth debut from his new End Reign project with members of Integrity, Bloodlet, All Out War and Pig Destroyer. Truth be told, he used to have more on there, but the Baltimore-based guitarist says he scrapped half of his solos upon hearing the jaw-dropping, sweep-and-tap complexity that Exhumed/Noisem shredder Sebastian Phillips affixed to album centerpiece "Chasing Divinity."

"I had a solo in my head that I wanted to put on the record, but it was way beyond my ability as a guitar player to pull off," Romeo says, adding that Phillips' first take was so spot-on that Romeo recruited the guitarist into End Reign full time. "It was exactly what I wanted — very Marty Friedman *Rust in Peace*; it reminded me of 'Hangar 18.' It was so good that I had to laugh. I sent it to the other guys and was like, 'Sebastian has to be in this band!'"

Romeo's decision paid off, with the division of labor enriching End Reign with two uniquely flavored lead styles: intricately sculptured, neo-classical flurries (Romeo) and stream-of-conscious scatter-shots of chaos (Phillips). "I'm much more meticulous," Romeo says. "I guess [*my method*] is super OCD, and Sebastian's is real lax. What I like is that you can tell who's who every time." Where the pair see eye to eye is their love for extending solos well into a vocal-heavy verse — a longtime hallmark of Integrity, the Cleveland-formed cult faves Romeo has played with since 2014. "It's like a boiling pot starting to overflow, and nothing is safe," Romeo says of the aesthetic.

While album opener "Desolate Fog" fittingly barrels into a brooding, Integrity-style d-beat, Romeo says its chorus also pays homage to the sinisterly sinuous chord flair of George Lynch's Dokken period. "It rips into an A power chord... then you're augmenting the fifth, and then diminishing it back. You can make a riff out of that without having to move the entire body of the chord, you know? It's a little sub-melody, but it's really powerful."

On that same track, vocalist Mike Score howls out End Reign's mission statement: "I give you the darkness to bring you the light." It's become a rally cry for a group of hardcore lifers whose music may sound punishing as hell, but revels in a communal catharsis. As Romeo puts it: "We always joke about people that aren't into this kind of music, and how it all sounds the same to them — it's all 'devil, devil, devil!' — but heavy music brings a lot of people joy."

End Reign main man Domenic Romeo

"We always joke about people that aren't into this kind of music, and how it all sounds the same to them — it's all 'devil, devil, devil!' — but heavy music brings a lot of people joy"

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** B.C. Rich Mockingbird with custom Lace Drop & Gain pickups and Ernie Ball Light Top/Heavy Bottom strings
- **AMPS** Custom Black Cat Amplification Carnivora 50-watt head
- **EFFECTS** "It's all the Carnivora, with an OG Boss DM2 to wet the solos."

PROVIDED/PR

NEWS OF THE (GUITAR) WORLD

SIT BACK AND GET READY TO RELIVE THE BIGGEST, BADDEST, WEIRDEST AND SADDEST GUITAR-CENTRIC HEADLINES FROM THE WILD RIDE THAT WAS **2023**

JANUARY 2024
PAGE THIRTY

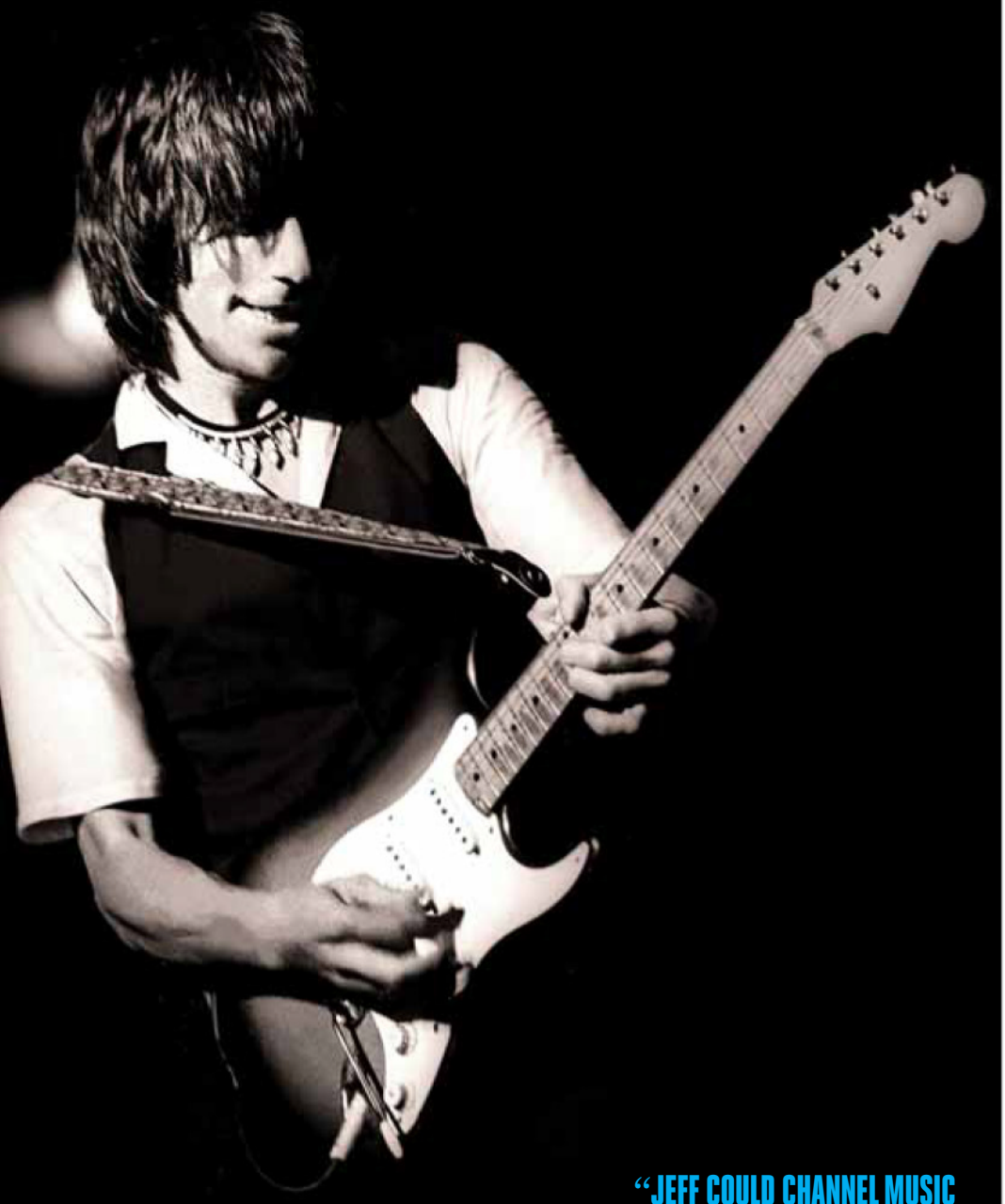
PACKING MORE TWISTS and turns than a Quentin Tarantino movie binge, 2023 will be remembered for many reasons — some good, some surprising and some utterly heartbreaking. There was the return of the mighty **Metallica**, and while many of us were impressed by *72 Seasons*, as you'll read below, others weren't so taken with the new material. The recently reunited **Pantera** — with **Zakk Wylde** and **Charlie Benante** joining **Phil Anselmo** and **Rex Brown** — embarked on their first tour since the initial handful of Latin American dates at the end of last year, with the general consensus being this is a celebration very much worth witnessing.

There also was a fair amount of controversy, starting with an acrimonious split between **Mick Mars** and the remaining members of **Mötley Crüe**, which got very public and very legal after it was announced they'd hired **John 5** to take the longtime guitarist's place on the road and for future recordings. Other bizarre headlines included the discovery of **Mary Ford**'s 1961 Gibson Les Paul SG Custom on Facebook Marketplace, which was quickly snapped up by Gibson and brought to the Vault at their Garage in Nashville, and **Roger Waters** deciding to re-record Pink Floyd's best-selling album.

The year also witnessed some big-name comebacks, from rock 'n' roll originals **the Rolling Stones** to pop-punk idols **Blink-182**, as well as the long-awaited live return of **AC/DC** at the inaugural Power Trip festival in October, while in stark contrast veterans such as **Buddy Guy** and **Aerosmith** announced they would soon be retiring from the world's stages. And then, of course, there are those we lost along the way — starting with the death of arguably the most inventive and deeply admired guitar player of all time only a few days into the new year. Almost a year on from **Jeff Beck**'s unexpected passing, we're still struggling to comprehend the huge sense of loss.

So, without further ado, here's a look at some of the biggest guitar moments of 2023.

THE NEWS OF 2023



"JEFF COULD CHANNEL MUSIC FROM THE ETHEREAL. HIS TECHNIQUE [WAS] UNIQUE. HIS IMAGINATION APPARENTLY LIMITLESS"

— Jimmy Page

Jeff Beck performs in Berkeley, California, September 5, 1980

LARRY HULST/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Words by **AMIT SHARMA**

RIP JEFF BECK

IN FAIRNESS, EVEN all these months later, nothing that happened over the course of 2023 can compete with the sizable hole left by Jeff Beck. He was the definition of what all of us strive to be — a musician who was deeply connected and in tune with whatever guitar he happened to be holding, someone who was unafraid to experiment in front of people and surprise all of us, himself included, with the results. Geoffrey Arnold Beck died from a bacterial meningitis infection at age 78 on January 10, and our world hasn't felt quite the same since. We'll never hear his fingers snake their way through "Cause We've Ended As Lovers," "Led Boots" or "Brush with the Blues" again — and our lives are infinitely poorer for it. Perhaps it was his one-time bandmate in the Yardbirds, Jimmy Page, who best captured the mood of the guitar community: "The six stringed Warrior is no longer here for us to admire the spell he could weave around our mortal emotions. Jeff could channel music from the ethereal. His technique unique. His imaginations apparently limitless. Jeff, I will miss you along with your millions of fans."

SLASH, WOLFGANG, JERRY CANTRELL AND... BARBIE?!

IT SHOULD COME as no surprise that the *Barbie* movie, a Hollywood blockbuster starring superstars Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, ended up being the most talked-about film of the year. But given all its nostalgic bubblegum imagery and mainstream hype, one thing none of us would have banked on was Slash and Wolfgang Van Halen collaborating

for the very first time on its soundtrack, joining forces specifically on "I'm Just Ken." And that's not the only rock 'n' roll connection, either. In one of the scenes, Ken serenades Barbie with an ebony Gibson acoustic adorned with stickers spelling out his name in the Metallica font. On closer inspection, it soon became apparent that the guitar in question was in fact a Jerry Cantrell Fire Devil Songwriter, with distinguishable features such as the "Firefly" pickguard and telltale "Jerry Cantrell" truss rod cover.

UNASSUMING GUITAR TEACHER GOES VIRAL

IT IS NOT a common occurrence to see *America's Got Talent* judge Simon Cowell openly applaud loud, shredding guitars — but this is yet another of the surprises 2023 had in store for us. The 59-year-old contestant who performed Queen's "We Will Rock You" as a fret-burning instrumental was John Wines, a guitar teacher based in England who boasts more than 1.5 million online followers under the alias Old Grey Guitarist. "I was not expecting *that*," said Cowell, as an excited crowd started screaming "We want more!" at the top of their lungs. Though he ended up getting knocked out in the semi-finals, it was an undeniable moment of victory for guitar enthusiasts around the world.

BERNIE MARSDEN WAS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS WORK IN WHITESNAKE FROM 1978 TO 1982, WITH WRITING CREDITS INCLUDING "HERE I GO AGAIN"

Bernie Marsden amid some of his favorite gear in October 1983

RIP BERNIE MARSDEN

WE HEARD IN August the sad news of British guitar legend Bernie Marsden passing away at age 72. He'd performed in groups such as Paice Ashton Lord, Alaska and the Moody Marsden Band, and embarked on a lengthy solo career, though was arguably best known for his work in Whitesnake from 1978 to 1982, with writing credits to songs like "Fool for Your Loving," "Lovehunter," "Trouble" and, most famously, "Here I Go Again." In what would sadly be his final *GW* interview, the man who famously played a 1959 Les Paul Standard he referred to as "The Beast" helped us pay tribute to George Harrison for the September 2021 cover story. "To put it simply: no Beatles, no George, no me," Marsden said. "I'm proud to have gotten to know him when I was in Whitesnake in the 1970s. He invited me to his home, where he showed me his guitars, and we listened to and played music in his studio. I still feel very privileged to have gotten to call him a friend, but that's another story."

KIRK HAMMETT LAUGHS IN THE FACE OF CRITICS

IN THE METALLICA cover story that coincided with the release of the band's 11th full-length, *72 Seasons*, we noted how "this is the sound of Metallica showing us they're the masters of their own destiny" and praised the quartet for seeming "more pissed off, defiant and inventive than they have in a long time." But not everyone agreed. "The new Metallica song is great, but I thought the solo was pretty underwhelming, so here's something a bit spicier!" said YouTuber Bradley Hall in a video in which he wrote and performed his own solo in place of Hammett's "Lux Æterna" fretwork. When confronted about said criticism, the Metallica guitarist remained remarkably indifferent. "I was just laughing the whole time," he said. "I could string together, like, six or seven three-octave arpeggios in 16th notes, sit there every day and practice it and go, 'Hey, look what I can do!' but where am I gonna put it? It sounds like an exercise. I don't want to listen to exercises and warm-ups every time I hear a song."

THE NEWS OF 2023

[*clockwise from left*] **Before our August 2023 issue, Nuno Bettencourt hadn't appeared on the cover of *Guitar World* since 1992 (when he actually starred on the cover twice)**

A wall of Marshall cabinets (not to mention the shadows of Peter Frampton, a Gibson Les Paul and a very nice stool) in 2015

Myles Kennedy in Viveiro, Spain, in the summer of '23 with his new PRS signature model

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS (MARSDEN) FUTURE (GW) MARIANO REGIDOR/REDFERNS (KENNEDY) AL PEREIRA/GETTY IMAGES (MARSHALL)

MYLES KENNEDY GETS HIS FIRST PRS SIGNATURE MODEL

IT'D BE FAIR TO say Myles Kennedy is a pretty big deal these days. When he's not conquering arenas with Alter Bridge, the man who almost ended up replacing Robert Plant in Led Zeppelin tours the world with Slash and the Conspirators, and let's not forget he also has two dazzling solo albums to his name. Given the success of Mark Tremonti's PRS range, it was only a matter of time until the velvet-lunged singer/guitarist was awarded his own signature. And given its swamp ash body, 22 frets, 25.5" scale length and overall shape, there can be no confusion over where he's drawing inspiration from. The pair of PRS Narrowfield MK pickups were carefully voiced "to capture the courage of humbuckers and the spank of single coils," thanks to a five-way blade switch and push/pull tone control that acts as a preset tone roll-off for the treble position.

NUNO BETTENCOURT BURNS FRETS AND MELTS MINDS

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER their last studio album, Extreme returned in 2023 with their most ambitious offering ever. And it was the solo from "Rise" — the lead single from new album *Six* — that got the guitar community talking more than anything else this year, in which Nuno Bettencourt demonstrated just why he's one of the most virtuosic and tasteful shredders in the game using a smorgasbord of furious alternate picking, divebombs, D minor pentatonic blues and, of course, those head-twisting muted hammer-ons for the big finale. For more about this Nuno guy, head to page 56.

MARSHALL IS SOLD TO A SWEDISH SPEAKER COMPANY

HAVING PLAYED A substantial role in developing overdriven sounds, with notable users including everyone from Jimi Hendrix to Joe Bonamassa and Tool and a rich heritage that dates back to 1962, amplifier brands simply don't come much more iconic than Marshall. This year brought an end to its family ownership, as the brand was acquired by Swedish firm Zound Industries for an undisclosed amount of dough. It wasn't completely out of the blue; the company had partnered with Marshall 13 years prior to produce their lifestyle products, including headphones and speaker systems. In a press release, Terry Marshall, son of deceased founder Jim, said, "Since my father and I created the original Marshall amp back in 1962, we have always looked for ways to deliver the pioneering Marshall sound to music lovers of all backgrounds and music tastes across the world," adding that he was confident that the newly formed Marshall Group umbrella company "will elevate this mission and spur the love for the brand." Other big Marshall news included the rebirth of four classic pedals and the launch of the Studio JTM models.

MATTEO MANCUSO RELEASES HIS DEBUT ALBUM

WHILE THERE'S CLEARLY no shortage of new names emerging as future guitar stars, few have come as hotly tipped as 26-year-old fingerstyle virtuoso Matteo Mancuso, with world-beating talents like Joe Bonamassa, Steve Vai and Tosin Abasi all singing his praises. Released back in July by Mascot Label Group, the Sicilian's debut album, *The Journey,* certainly delivered on all that promise and then some, with tracks like "Silkroad," "Samba Party" and "Drop D" nodding to jazz fusion greats like Guthrie Govan and Pat Metheny and ultimately demonstrating just how brilliantly well-rounded he is as a player. With stars burning this bright, there can be no doubt the future of guitar is in safe hands. →

MICK MARS VS. MÖTLEY CRÜE

AS THE SOLE guitar player in the band and co-writer for era-defining tracks like "Girls, Girls, Girls," "Dr. Feelgood" and "Same Ol' Situation (S.O.S.)," Mick Mars' contributions to Mötley Crüe cannot be overstated. And despite the age difference between him and the other members, as well as the health complications he's endured for the majority of his adult life, it was shocking to see how things played out for the glam metal quartet in 2023. As well as accusing the group of using backing tracks live, Mars was adamant that he was being maneuvered out of the group he helped put on the musical map. "Now they're trying to take my legacy away, my part of Mötley Crüe, my ownership of the name, the brand," he told *Rolling Stone*. "How can you fire Mr. Heinz from Heinz ketchup? He owns it. Frank Sinatra's or Jimi Hendrix's legacy goes on forever, and their heirs continue to profit from it. They're trying to take that away from me. I'm not going to let them."

MARY FORD'S '61 GIBSON ENDS UP ON FACEBOOK MARKETPLACE

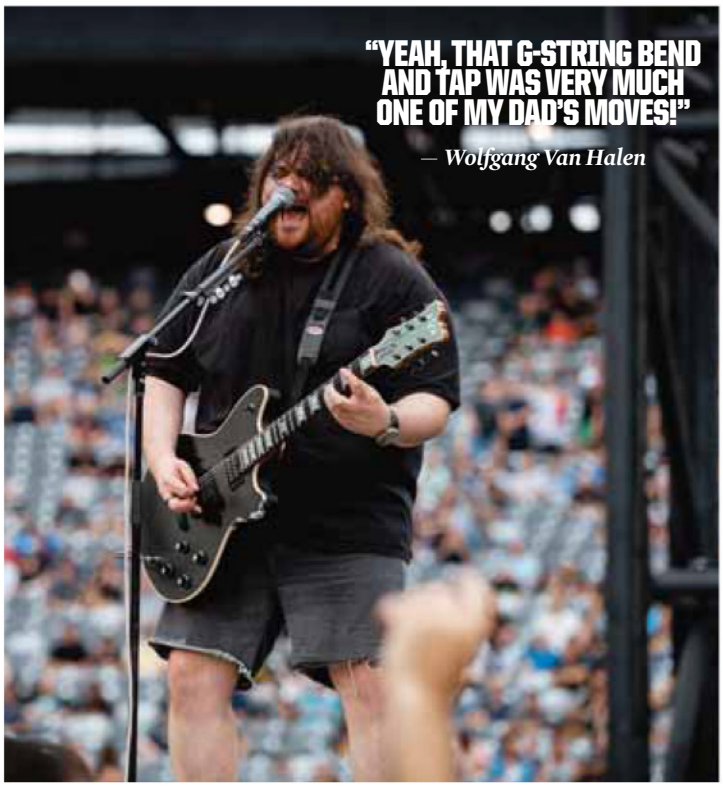
IT WOULD BE fair to compare Facebook Marketplace to an online flea market; you never quite know what you might find and whether to take the listings on (pardon the pun) face value. But when Gibson Director of Brand Experience Mark Agnesi was sent the link to an ad for Mary Ford's 1961 Gibson Les Paul SG Custom in Westerly, Rhode Island, he knew he had to act fast. Not only was the highly collectible triple humbucker double-cut in great condition for a 62-year-old instrument, but it also came with a piece of a handwritten setlist taped to its back, adding even more weight to its grand sense of history. The famous instrument once seen on the cover of Les Paul & Mary Ford's 1962 album *Warm and Wonderful* was carefully transported to the Vault in the Nashville Gibson Garage, which opened its doors in 2021.

YAMAHA ACQUIRES GUILD, ANNOUNCES KIM THAYIL SIGNATURE MODEL

IN FEBRUARY IT was announced that Yamaha had bought Córdoba Music Group, the company that owned Guild, DeArmond pickups, Córdoba Guitars, HumiCase and two string companies — Savarez and Aquila. And that's not the only big announcement concerning Guild; in September it was revealed that one of their most recognizable endorsees, Soundgarden's Kim Thayil, would finally be getting his own S-100 Polara signature models, which, all things considered, looks set to be the best-selling artist model in Yamaha history.

NITA STRAUSS REJOINS ALICE COOPER, RELEASES STAR-STUDDED ALBUM

ONE OF LAST year's biggest stories was Nita Strauss leaving the Alice Cooper band to head out on tour with Demi Lovato. At the time she maintained no doors had been closed, however, she was simply trying out new things — and those words rang true earlier in March when it was announced she would be returning to Cooper's notoriously horror-themed rock 'n' roll circus. She also unveiled her second solo album, which fea-



[*clockwise from bottom left*] Mick Mars in 2020, which, um, turned out to be near the tail end of his time with Mötley Crüe

Kim Thayil and his new signature Guild Polera

Nita Strauss and Alice Cooper on stage in Concord, California, September 22, 2023

Wolfgang Van Halen in action with an EVH SA-126. For more about all things Wolfgang, head to page 64

tured guests as esteemed as Marty Friedman, Alissa White-Gluz, Lzzy Hale and even Coop himself. And as for her own guitar pyrotechnics, she revealed she'd used time off during the pandemic to work on her alternate picking. "There's a fast lick in that first verse that I probably lifted from his parts in Racer X's 'Technical Difficulties,'" she told me. "There were definitely a lot of Paul Gilbert exercises happening in my house over quarantine."

SUNN AMPS RETURN – WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM FENDER

IN AUGUST IT was announced that Fender and Mission Engineering were teaming up to revive cult amp brand Sunn Amplifiers, famously used and abused by high-decibel rock masters like Jimi Hendrix and Pete Townshend and stoner/doom dealers such as Boris, Melvins and Sunn O))) — the latter of whom loved the amps so much they named their band after them. It's been a long time coming, considering Fender bought the company back in the mid-Eighties. Expect "historic reproductions of classic Sunn designs" and "new products that incorporate modern technology" ranging from $499 to $3,299. "We're proud to partner with Mission Engineering to uphold the legacy of the Sunn Amplifier brand and look forward to introducing modern players to the raw power that these classic amplifiers are capable of," said Richard Bussey, Fender VP of Accessories, Lifestyle and Licensing.

ROGER WATERS RE-RECORDS *THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON*

VINTAGE ROCK RELEASES don't come much more universally admired than Pink Floyd's 1973 masterpiece, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, which many regard to be a perfect album from start to finish. Which is why news of Roger Waters re-recording its 10 tracks as *The Dark Side of the Moon Redux* was met by bewilderment and dismay, especially following the release of first single "Money" — in which Waters replaced David Gilmour's legendary solo with a spoken-word poem set in a metaphorical boxing ring. "The new recording is more reflective, I think, and it's more indicative of what the concept of the record was," Waters said. Interesting...

WOLFGANG UNVEILS SECOND MAMMOTH WVH ALBUM

ANYONE WHO HEARD the Mammoth WVH debut will have known to expect great things from its follow-up, which was released in August. Once again Wolfgang Van Halen committed to performing everything himself and dazzling us with a perfect package of fine-tuned songwriting, arena-worthy chorus hooks and scintillating two-handed techniques. As well as nodding to his father's legendary solo on "Panama" ("Yeah, that G-string bend and tap was very much one of my dad's moves!"), "Take a Bow" was also notable for the equipment used to record it. "The Frankenstein was what I used on that solo," he told this writer. "I had it plugged into my dad's original Marshall head and cabinet... so it was exactly what he used for the early Van Halen stuff. I think you can hear it's *that* tone." For more on Wolfgang, head to page 58.

IN MEMORIAM

Other legendary guitarists who passed away over the course of the year include **David Crosby**, who made rock history in the mid Sixties as an original member of the Byrds and later became one quarter of folk supergroup Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; he died only a week after Jeff Beck. Two months later, it was announced that **David Lindley** — the multi-instrumentalist who had played in Crosby & Nash, as well as with Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Rod Stewart, Dolly Parton and Ry Cooder — had died from chronic kidney damage following Long Covid. Les Paul devotee **Gary Rossington**, the longest-surviving founding member of Lynyrd Skynyrd, passed away in March, leaving behind a Southern rock legacy like no other. Other notable losses include **Robbie Robertson** (Bob Dylan/the Band), **Guy Bailey** (the Quireboys), **Tim Bachman** (Bachman-Turner Overdrive/Brave Belt), **Ryan Siew** (Polaris), **Jack Sonni** (Dire Straits), **George Tickner** (Journey) and **Chris Overland** (FM). →

KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES (MARS) GUILD (THAYIL) TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES (NITA/ALICE) ANDRAIA ALLSOP (WVH)

Josh Homme in Toronto, August 4, 2023

[*left*] Our September 2023 cover

SOPHIE LLOYD RELEASES LONG-AWAITED SOLO DEBUT

IT WAS A big year for Sophie Lloyd, who continued to perform on arena stages around the world in her new session gig with Machine Gun Kelly and even landed her first-ever *GW* cover. She also released her debut solo album, *Imposter Syndrome,* in November — which, as well as showcasing her impressive talents as a writer and arranger, included some high-profile guests such as Trivium's Matt Heafy, Halestorm singer/guitarist Lzzy Hale and Steel Panther frontman Michael Starr. And there's more, the Sophie Lloyd Signature Series was launched by Kiesel back in May, radically allowing players to customize and spec out the double-cutaway models as they see fit.

JOSH HOMME FIGHTS CANCER AND RETURNS ALL-GUNS-BLAZING

ON TOP OF the well-documented child custody struggles with ex-wife Brody Dalle, Queens of the Stone Age singer/guitarist Josh Homme also revealed that he'd been treated for cancer in 2022. Though he remained understandably tight-lipped over the experience, he referred to the health struggles as "just the cherry on top of an interesting time period." It very much seems as if he took all of that emotional baggage and churned it into a new album, *In Times New Roman...* which was released in June. Led by singles such as "Emotion Sickness," "Carnavoyeur" and "Paper Machete" — which were notably more atmospheric and moody than those of its disco-laced *Villains* predecessor — QOTSA's eighth full-length witnessed Homme and co-guitarist Troy Van Leeuwen delivering an absolute masterclass in vintage-leaning, life-affirming rock 'n' roll.

MARK TREMONTI REVEALS HE'S LAUNCHING A PEDAL COMPANY

AS EVERY *GW* reader will know, famous guitar players wanting to start their own gear companies is nothing revolutionary; some of the more successful ventures include Tosin's Abasi Concepts, the Ola Englund-run Solar Guitars, Zakk's Wylde Audio and Kirk Hammett's high-gain pedal specialists KHDK. But that's clearly not stopping Mark Tremonti from trying his luck as well. He disclosed he would be launching his own pedal brand in an interview focusing on his live rig. "I'm trying to develop a whole line of pedals," he said after being quizzed about an unbranded prototype Uni-Vibe clone. He then went on to say he's still thinking of a name for the company and has three units in mind for the big launch — the aforementioned vibe, a tremolo and an overdrive ("Of course I'm going after the Klon... *Everybody's* going after the Klon," he said).

NEURAL DSP KEEP ADDING BIG NAMES TO THEIR ARCHETYPE RANGE

DIGITAL AMP AND effects specialists Neural DSP have really come a long way over the last five or so years. As well as releasing one of the most advanced units of its kind in the Quad Cortex, there's been a whole host of signature Archetype plug-ins for guitar heroes like Cory Wong, Tim Henson, Plini and even one for Dream Theater mastermind John Petrucci. In October it was announced that Brazilian session maestro and Suhr endorsee Mateus Asato would also be getting his own Archetype, packing all of his favorite heads and cabinets — plus effects like compression, overdrive, fuzz, tremolo, chorus and vibrato — into one tidy interface for $119. Given his profile as one of the most expressive and respected six-stringers to launch a career via the Internet, with even John Mayer citing him as "one of the best guitar players around," there's been plenty of buzz.

THE BOSS ACCIDENTALLY HITS TECH WITH TELE

IF YOU'RE BRUCE Springsteen's tech, you've probably seen it all a million times. But no matter how prepared you might be, as we all know, sometimes things just don't quite go according to plan. While performing in Atlanta at the beginning of February, the Boss launched his sunburst Telecaster at long-serving assistant Kevin Buell as he's done many times in the past. And though he had his hands in the air and eyes on the prize, Buell miscalculated the trajectory of the missile and ended up taking a hit to the head, consequently ending up on the floor. After Springsteen quickly walked over to help his colleague and make sure there were no serious injuries, the show went on without any further hiccups.

MARTY FRIEDMAN BACK ON STAGE WITH MEGADETH

MEGADETH HAVE HAD some truly world-class lead players in their ranks over the years, though most of us would agree it was the pairing of Dave Mustaine with Marty Friedman over the course of the Nineties that produced a lot of their finest work. It all came to a head in 2000, and both Mustaine and Friedman have been moving in different circles ever since — until February 27, 2023, that is, when the metal titans were performing at the Budokan arena in Tokyo. Friedman, who moved to Japan in 2003, joined the band for three classic songs from the albums he played on — "Countdown to Extinction," "Tornado of Souls" and "Symphony of Destruction." European fans were also lucky to witness thrash history in the making when Friedman joined Megadeth once again at German festival Wacken Open Air, performing "Trust," "Tornado of Souls," "Symphony of Destruction" and "Holy Wars... The Punishment Due." In other Megadeth news, Wintersun's Teemu Mäntysaari was hired to fill in on parts of their world tour while current guitarist Kiko Loureiro tended to a family emergency. GW

FUTURE (GW) JEREMYCHANPHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES (HOMME)

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OUR FAVORITE GEAR OF THE YEAR

Fender's new Tone Master Pro and [*below*] The Guv'nor by Marshall

THERE WAS AN ONSLAUGHT OF NEW GUITAR PRODUCTS RELEASED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS. THESE ARE THE ONES THAT HAD US ALL TALKING

Words by **AMIT SHARMA**

MARK WEISS/GETTY IMAGES

THE BEST OF 2023

FENDER
TONE MASTER PRO

$1,699, fender.com

THE WORDS "FENDER" and "digital floorboard" hadn't really existed in the same sentence until October, when the guitar giants dropped a bombshell: they'd be entering the multi-effects processor market with a new invention, the Tone Master Pro. Granted, it's an area other companies like Line 6, Boss and Neural DSP have been dominating, but the Big F are claiming theirs to be "the ultimate guitar processor in terms of tone, dynamics, power and user-friendliness," offering "staggeringly accurate recreations of the world's most beloved amps." Featuring eight processors, which is twice the amount of Neural's Quad Cortex, it comes loaded with more than 100 amp and effect models, including the first-ever fully licensed EVH 5150 III Stealth. On top of that, you get more than 6,000 Fender-captured IRs, 500 user preset slots, 10 fully configurable footswitches, a 60-second stereo looper and a seven-inch color touchscreen. It's a revolutionary product in every sense, as a few of us lucky ones got to see in September in NYC.

MARSHALL
PEDALS

$249, marshall.com

GIVEN HOW MANY clones there've been of Marshall's long-discontinued Bluesbreaker pedal — most famously the $325 Analogman King of Tone that comes with a four-year wait — it's a wonder the U.K. amp giants took so long to reissue it. The big news finally came in February, when it was revealed they would not only be resurrecting the Bluesbreaker, but they'd also be bringing back the Drivemaster, Shredmaster and Gary Moore's primary stompbox for *Still Got the Blues*, The Guv'nor. Hand-built

at the Bletchley, England, factory just like the originals, the new units feature almost exactly the same circuitry and components. Featuring near-identical topologies, the Drivemaster and The Guv'nor are closely related, the main difference being the latter's send/return loop. As its name suggests, the Shredmaster is the darkest-sounding and most metallic of the four, whereas the Bluesbreaker replicates the sound of the legendary 1962 model that rose to prominence, thanks to a 1966 album called *Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton*. We might be talking more about that album in our next issue, by the way...

JACKSON

AMERICAN SERIES VIRTUOSO

$1,949, jacksonguitars.com

IF THERE WERE an award for the Best Promotional Campaign of 2023, it would have to go to Jackson, who launched the American Series Virtuoso in September with no shortage of ingenuity and flair. Periphery mastermind Misha Mansoor was left in charge of composing a track for himself and fellow endorsees Marty Friedman, Dave Davidson, Debbie Gough and Clint Tustin, and boy, did the fireworks fly. Ultimately, however, there was much more to it than a masterclass in high-budget marketing; the American-built Dinky-inspired models come with direct-mounted Seymour Duncan humbuckers, a Floyd Rose 1500 Series double-locking tremolo system, Gotoh MG-T-locking tuners and graphite-reinforcement rods in the bolt-on five-piece caramelized maple Speed neck. And thanks to the 12-16" compound radius ebony fingerboard, with rolled edges facilitating low action across its 24 jumbo frets — coupled with the superior tuning stability and highly inspiring tones — it's a guitar that pretty much plays itself. Bravo!

POSITIVE GRID

SPARK GO SMART AMP

$129, positivegrid.com

HEAVILY SHRINKING THEIR designs year-by-year without sacrificing any of that headline-stealing connectivity and innovation, Positive Grid have dominated the practice amp market in recent times. And with good reason; all of their Spark products boast dazzling tones, highly practical features and, most importantly, unbeatable sound quality. This year's Go is the latest in the range and packs all of that clever thinking into a deceptively loud 5-Watt amp that's roughly the same size as an MXR pedal, using computational audio to fill whatever room you use it in. It can last up to eight hours with every charge and doubles up as a valuable learning tool, with functions such as Auto Chords and Smart Jam on top of the 50,000 tones available through the app and cloud. Just after the Spark Go's release, we called it "the smallest and most intelligent device of its kind" — and given that it can even power the 140-Watt Spark Cab announced in October, those are words we are definitely standing by.

DAWNER PRINCE

DIKTATOR MKII PREAMP/BOOST/OVERDRIVE

$289, dawnerprince.com

WITH A LONG list of high-profile endorsees including Dave Gilmour, John Mayer and Richard Fortus, these Croatian pedal aficionados are undoubtedly grand masters of their craft. The Diktator was their debut release, and to celebrate its first decade of production they've given it one hell of an update. The input and output FET buffer stages have been enhanced for more dynamic response, and the drive sections and tone controls

[*clockwise from left*] Marshall's resurrected Blues Breaker pedal; Positive Grid's Spark Go (and someone's iPhone); the super-slick Jackson American Series Virtuoso; the eye-catching Ibanez Steve Vai PIA77 BON; the Dawner Prince Diktator MKII Preamp/Boost/Overdrive; Sterling by Music Man's affordable St. Vincent Goldie

have also been heavily upgraded. It still, however, keeps to the original design with the 30dB Fuse preamp boost on the left side and the Detonator overdrive on the right. As well as controls for Boost, Level, Treble, Bass and Drive, there are handy switches to select between Dark/Bright modes and Soft/Hard clipping for uncompromised versatility. The artwork has also been updated; there's a new Stalin-esque dictator whose eyes light up menacingly with your pick attack while also giving you tones to rule the world.

IBANEZ
STEVE VAI PIA77 BON

$8,499, ibanez.com

ADMITTEDLY, WITH ITS custom-shop price tag and garish looks, the latest Vai model from Ibanez is not an instrument for everyone. But if you're a fan of the man's work and the guitars he's played, this year's PIA77 — which marks 35 years of partnership between the artist and manufacturer — will certainly be keeping you up at night, mainly thanks to the striking hydro-dipped multicolor "Brilliance of Now" swirl finish that's not used on any other production model. The rest of the specs are exactly what you'd expect from the man who famously wrote "Bad Horsie" — an alder body, a five-piece maple/walnut neck and a rosewood fretboard, as well as a Lo-Pro Edge tremolo, DiMarzio UtoPIA pickups and Gotoh machine heads. There's also a high-pass push/pull pot on the volume control as per previous PIA models, and a scalloped board between the 21st and 24th frets. Whether you need a crying machine to whisper a prayer, or an animal with giant balls of gold to ensure the audience is listening, this will get the job done.

STERLING BY MUSIC MAN
ST. VINCENT GOLDIE

$829, sterlingbymusicman.com

THE ST. VINCENT artist models have been hugely popular for Ernie Ball Music Man and, consequently, its more affordable Indonesian-made line Sterling By Music Man. Two years on from the flagship company announcing the Annie Clark-approved Goldie, the budget brand finally got round to releasing their own version. And despite being over $2,000 cheaper, the new models feature the same eye-catching finish, the original gold foil St. Vincent signature pickups, that quirky offset body shape and those unique fretboard inlays. →

[*from left*] The Boss DM-101 Delay Machine; Blackstar's Dept. 10 Amped 3 Guitar Amplifier Pedal; Squier's new Paranormal Jazzmaster XII; the Martin D-18 StreetLegend; Guild's long-awaited S-100 Polara Kim Thayil model; the ODD Box V1 overdrive by Warm Audio

As for differences, the okoume body has been swapped for nyatoh and there's a vintage-style tremolo bridge instead of the chrome-plated version found on the American-made original.

BOSS

DM-101 DELAY MACHINE

$499, boss.info

IF LINE 6 knocked out *the* delay of 2022 with the long-awaited arrival of their brilliantly updated DL4 mkII, then this year the trophy belongs to Boss, who truly outdid themselves with their "ultimate analog delay" DM-101 Delay Machine. Sharing a similar aesthetic to the recent RE-202 Space Echo, this digitally controlled powerhouse features eight BBDs under smart CPU control — giving users digital functionality while retaining 100 percent analog signal processing throughout. It boasts 12 unique modes that range from gritty, vintage-style echoes to crystal-clear, modern-sounding repeats, as well as a modulation section with Rate and Depth controls, plus a Variation knob for more tonal options. There are four onboard memories, a total of 127 MIDI-accessible memories, and expandable control via external footswitches and expression pedals. So if you like the saturated warmth of analog delays as much as you do the tight control and precision of digital devices, you no longer have to make a choice.

BLACKSTAR

DEPT. 10 AMPED 3 GUITAR AMPLIFIER PEDAL

$599, blackstaramps.com

WHETHER IT BROKE down, got lost in transit and simply been unfeasible to bring along, if you ever found yourself in a situation where you were forced to play a gig with no amp, then you'd be praying to have something like this pedal close by. The 100-Watt three-channel floorboard features allows players to select between EL84, EL34 or 6L6 power amp modes and 100-Watt, 20-Watt or 1-Watt output modes, with its own effects loop plus built-in reverb, boost and Cab Rig DSP speaker simulation. It can easily connect to any eight or 16 Ohm speaker cabinet and there's an XLR out too, for those who prefer going direct. Once you find the tones you like — which doesn't take long given Blackstar's expertise in such matters — you can then store the settings as a recallable patch. There are also switches for warm/bright modes, crunch/super crunch and two types of distortion, and the USB compatibility means the Amped 3 doubles up as a handy studio tool going straight into your DAW of choice.

SQUIER

PARANORMAL JAZZMASTER XII

$449, fender.com

IF THERE'S ANY product of 2023 that screamed, "Take my money right now!" it would probably be this 12-string Jazzmaster retailing for under $500. Given that an American-made equivalent with Fender on the headstock doesn't exist and would probably cost five times as much if it did, we'd like to think this is a pretty incredible deal. The 25.5"-scale Squier Paranormal Jazzmaster XII comes in Lake Placid Blue or Olympic White and features dual Fender-Designed alnico single-coil Jazzmaster pickups with 3-way switching, a poplar body and a vintage-inspired 'hockey stick' headstock, as well as a hybrid string-through-body/top-load bridge for reliable intonation. So if you've been talking about buying a 12-string electric and keep telling everyone you haven't gotten round to it, make no mistake, you've really run out of excuses.

WARM AUDIO

ODD BOX V1 HARD-CLIPPING OVERDRIVE

$119, warmaudio.com

FULLTONE'S OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE Drive, better known as the OCD, is undoubtedly one of the most revered pedals of its kind. But following the backlash to owner Mike Fuller's offensive outbursts in 2020 and the company effectively closing its doors last year — it has, shall we say, a complicated history. Which is where Warm Audio come into the picture. The Texas studio specialists, who much like Universal Audio are relative newcomers to the pedal market, have been cloning classics like the Klon Centaur and Hermida Audio Zen Drive with eye-watering accuracy, and this year's ODD is no exception — replicating the original's stunning tones at a very affordable price. The pedals carry premium components such as a TLO82CP Op-Amp and 2N7000 transistors, and feature a UK/US voicing switch on top of the usual trio of controls you'd expect to find on a drive pedal. Unless you're really offended by Comic Sans, it's hard to see where you can go wrong.

MARTIN

D-18 STREETLEGEND

$2,399, martinguitar.com

WHEN IT COMES to acoustic history, Martin have a heritage like no other, and all these years later it's crystal clear they're still thoroughly invested in creating guitars that harken back to their most innovative years — a time when some of the world's finest instruments were being crafted. 2023 marked their first foray into the world of aged aesthetics, matching those famous old-school tones with

vintage looks on models like this D-18 StreetLegend, taking more inspiration from the priceless treasures in their guitar museum than ever before. Its pairing of a satin-finished high-quality spruce top with mahogany back and sides is as classic as it gets, producing the phenomenally rich and full-bodied tones these dreadnoughts have been long renowned for. You'll also find open-gear aged tuners and a satin-aged pickguard along with a high performance Modified Low Oval profile on the ebony-topped-mahogany neck. All things considered, this could very well be *the* acoustic guitar of 2023.

GUILD

S-100 POLARA KIM THAYIL

$899, guildguitars.com

IT'S BEEN A long time coming but the Soundgarden riff wizard finally got his own Guild signatures in 2023: there's the USA Artist Edition models, limited to just 30 and retailing for $6,999, and then the regular Eastern-produced run as part of the wallet-friendly Newark St. Collection. As it turns out, his connection to the company is something that happened by pure chance. "I wasn't especially drawn to Guild electrics, it just so happened that the one I found was an affordable used guitar in good shape," Thayil tells *Guitar World*. "It had a black finish and I think I got it for around $235 when I was 18. The new guitars were out of my price range so I had to look at secondhand models. This one was in great condition and a nice color! It had peculiarities too, because of that area behind the bridge. The pickups were somewhat microphonic, so you'd get this cool feedback. It wouldn't really squeal, unless you knew how to make it do that, but you'd get this nice little hum. If you stood →

near the amp, you could move that hum around... I loved that. The S-100 was also not a heavy guitar like a Les Paul. There was something cool about the fact it was a little lighter."

GIBSON

CUSTOM COLOR SERIES LES PAUL STANDARDS

$2,599-$2,999, gibson.com

IF YOU'VE ALWAYS wanted a Les Paul Standard but have never been a fan of their typically traditional hues — which, let's be honest, are quite often variations of the late-Fifties bursts from the company's golden age — then 2023 was definitely the year for you. In August, it was revealed that 12 new finishes were being offered in the Custom Color Series, starting with Pelham Blue, Inverness Green, White, Ebony, Cardinal Red and Sparkling Burgundy as solid-color options. For those with a little more money to spend on figured tops, there was the welcome addition of Blueberry Burst, Ocean Blue, Translucent Oxblood, Honey Amber, '60s Cherry and Translucent Fuchsia. As per regular Les Paul Standards, the new finishes are available in '50s or '60s styles, which differ in terms of neck profiles, pickups and hardware, such as tuners and control pots.

GURUS

STEVE LUKATHER ECHOSEX 3 DELAY

$429, foxgeardistribution.com

AS WELL AS unveiling his new L4 signatures through Ernie Ball Music Man, Steve Lukather also teamed up with Italian pedal specialists Gurus for his own version of their Binson Echorec-inspired 100 percent analog Echosex 3 delay. It comes with his own settings "drawn on" by longtime tech Jon Gosnell in neon green, a self-calibrating tap-tempo and a 12AU7 preamp tube proudly on display in its center. There are controls for Repeat Tone, Volume Echo, Length of Swell, Echo Time and Age of Damage, which simulates mechanical degradation as per the magnetic drum delays of old and is capable of producing extreme warbles. On top of giving you fine Echorec-style

[*clockwise from left*] **Gibson's new Custom Color Series Les Paul Standards; the Electro-Harmonix Lizard Queen Octave Fuzz; PRS Guitars' mighty Modern Eagle V; Epiphone's new Dave Mustaine Flying V Custom; Gurus' Steve Lukather Echosex 3 Delay; a new batch of pedals by Universal Audio (all four of which are reviewed on pages 73 and 74)**

repeats out there, some of the proceeds are being donated to the Ed Asner Family Center For Autism, an LA-based charity founded by the legendary actor to support autistic children and their families.

PRS
MODERN EAGLE V

$4,950, prsguitars.com

NOBODY DOES LAVISH quite like PRS. This year the company launched SE McCarty 594, the SE McCarty 594 Singlecut and the SE Hollowbody Standard Piezo, as well as new models for David Grissom and Mark Holcomb – all of which are worthy of a place in this list. But it was the Modern Eagle V that stole headlines for all the right reasons, given that had been only available through limited runs as Private Stock. It's easily one of the most aesthetically pleasing guitars we've ever seen and features a total of 17 different pickup combinations, thanks to the HSH configuration and clever switching options courtesy of the push/pull tone knob and two mini toggles. "The Modern Eagle V is a sophisticated instrument not only in its craftsmanship but in its electronic and mechanical design," Paul Reed Smith said. "We've refined the pickup tones and are pleased to now add it to the Core lineup."

EPIPHONE
DAVE MUSTAINE FLYING V CUSTOM

$1,399, epiphone.com

WITH AN OLD friend joining them on stage and a new face filling in for Kiko Loureiro, it's been quite a year for Megadeth. Dave Mustaine also released three new signature guitars as part of his wider partnership with Gibson — two through Epiphone (the classic-feeling Flying V Custom and the more modernized Flying V Prophecy), plus the pointier Vanguard, through Kramer. Given that 24-fret Flying Vs are not common for Gibson or Epiphone, there was a lot of excitement over the new models, with the Flying V Custom in particular looking and sounding the closest to Mustaine's Gibson Custom Shop models from last year. The guitars come in a Black Metallic finish and feature a lightweight mahogany body with multi-ply binding, a mahogany neck with a sleek ebony fingerboard, a string-thru tailpiece and an Explorer-style 'hockey stick' headstock, plus the metal innovator's Seymour Duncan Thrash Factor humbuckers. If shredding is your business, then business is good.

Fender's new Vintera II series and [*right*] the VMan Totality Dual Overdrive by KHDK

UNIVERSAL AUDIO

PEDALS

$199-$399, uaudio.com

THEY'VE ONLY BEEN in the effects market since 2021, but Universal Audio have managed to establish themselves as one of the most consistently exceptional manufacturers in the game. The verdict is pretty much unanimous — every player knows that the studio wizards simply do not compromise on quality or ingenuity. And they've also been very busy. In April, they announced the Galaxy '74 Tape Echo and Reverb, Max Preamp and Dual Compressor and Del-Verb Ambience Companion. Four months later, they unveiled their first line of single-footswitch stompboxes: the Orion Tape Echo, 1176 Studio Compressor, Heavenly Plate Reverb and Evermore Studio Reverb. And then the big announcement came in September, when the company revealed they were releasing the Ox Stomp — bringing the world-class guitar cabinets, mics, room emulations and effects of their award-winning OX Amp Top Box (without the reactive load feature) to our feet. For a Universal Audio review, see page 73.

ELECTRO-HARMONIX

LIZARD QUEEN OCTAVE FUZZ

$99, ehx.com

"DOES THE WORLD really need another Electro-Harmonix fuzz pedal?" is a fairly reasonable question to ask yourself. In typical circumstances, some might say perhaps not, though on this occasion the New York pedal pioneers roped in JHS owner Josh Scott for his own unique twist on an octave fuzz. And so the Lizard Queen was born, a fixed gain transistor-based fuzz with controls for Volume, Octave and Balance — the latter allowing users to dial between its smoother Shadow sound or its raspy Sun setting. The nano-sized true bypass pedal was originally created by the JHS boss and graphic designer Daniel Danger as a homage to Electro-Harmonix, who then decided it was a product worth sharing with the world, especially given that it's a completely new and unique take on fuzz that marks a company first. Whether you prefer creamy silk-like fuzz or the harsh spitting kind, this will have you covered for very little money.

KHDK

VMAN TOTALITY DUAL OVERDRIVE

$249, khdkelectronics.com

BEFORE HE JOINED one of the biggest metal bands of all time, Slipknot bassist Alessandro "VMan" Venturella was a respected guitar tech working for Coheed and Cambria, Architects and Mastodon. The British musician had also previously handled lead guitars in bands such as Krokodil and Cry for Silence, which explains why his first-ever pedal is a dual-path overdrive that works for guitar, bass and even keys. After being split in two, the signal can be blended by the unique Gain Volume and Direct Volume faders on each side, and there are also controls for Gain, Tone, Bass and Treble. The Mid Shift switch is tuned to the multi-instrumentalist's preference and signature tone in the nine-member arena-crushing juggernaut which, unsurprisingly, can help users unleash all kinds of overdriven hell. "Totality is so gritty, you can plug in your fridge and the eggs will come out scrambled," Venturella said.

FENDER

VINTERA II SERIES

$1,149-$1,499, fender.com

WHEN FENDER UNVEILED the Vintera range with 21 instruments back in 2019, their mission was to replicate models from the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies at an affordable price point from their Mexico factory. The period-correct guitars and basses — as well as the modernized Modified options — quickly became some of the company's best-sellers, which is precisely why news of the Vintera II arriving in September was met with overwhelming enthusiasm. The Modified options have been dropped, with the company focusing on vintage finishes, era-correct pickups and authentic neck shapes from their golden years. Some of our favorite models in the lineup include the '50s Nocaster, '50s Jazzmaster, '60s Telecaster Thinline, '70s Telecaster Deluxe with Tremolo, '70s Maple Neck Jaguar and '70s Competition Mustang — though, to be honest, all of the guitars look exquisite in their own right. GW

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JANUARY 2024

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Queens of the Stone Age's Troy Van Leenwen [*left*] and Josh Homme on stage in San Francisco, October 6, 2023

STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY IMAGES

THE BEST OF 2023

Compiled by **ANDREW DALY, JOE BOSSO & DAMIAN FANELLI**

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

Song: Periphery, "Wildfire"
Riff: Covet, "Firebird"
Solo: Intervals, "Mnemonic"
Guitar Moment: Nuno Bettencourt and Extreme back with their new album, *Six*.
New Band: Blink-182 (They're not new, but Tom DeLonge's return makes it feel new again.)
New Guitarist: Olly Steele. Not completely new, but more people need to know about him.
New Gear: EVH SA-126. Take my word for it. Everyone can get one in 2024.
Album You Listened to Most: Foo Fighters, *But Here We Are*
Guitarist of the Year: Aaron Marshall

CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM

Songs: Jason Isbell & the 400 Unit, "Cast Iron Skillet" and Summer Walker (feat. Childish Gambino), "New Type"
Riff: Jamilla Woods, "Practice"
Album: Jamilla Woods, "Tiny Gardens"
Guitar Moment: Paramore, "This Is Why"
New Band: Yaya Bey
New Guitarist: Mathias Lattin
New Gear: Marshall ShredMaster
Album You Listened to Most: Daniel Caesar, *Never Enough*
Guitarist of the Year: Eric Gales

DEVON ALLMAN

Riff: "Lux Æterna" by Metallica's James Hetfield
Song: "Chaise Longue" by Wet Leg
Guitar Moment: Me, jamming with my friends on stage while on tour.
New Band: Goodnight, Texas
New Guitarist: Drew Smithers
New Gear: Not new, but my '63 Gibson SG in Alpine White — and my Klon.
Album You Listened to Most: *Lucifer on the Sofa* by Spoon
Guitarist of the Year: Jackson Stokes

LZZY HALE (HALESTORM)

Song: "Violence No Matter What" by Avatar. I am a little biased because I'm featured on this song, but the whole reason I said "yes" to this collaboration is because it rips!
Riff: The one that I just wrote but I can't tell you about.
Solo: The solo in "Violence No Matter What" by Avatar. It's like you're on a sinister merry-go-round.
Guitar Moment: The solo in Extreme's "Rise" by Nuno. A friend recently showed me this, and Nuno's performance blew my mind!
New Band: The Warning; they aren't that new, and they've been at it since they were kids, but they are having a big moment crashing into the scene right now, and I couldn't be happier for them. I challenge anyone to try and stay calm while those ladies wreck the stage.
New Guitarist: Dany Villarreal of the Warning. This woman is the Randy Rhoads of her generation. Her ferocity toward her craft is incredible. Every night, she shows the world how powerful it is to wield an ax!
New Gear: Ear Fuzz just sent me a custom Fuzzy Lzzy pedal that I absolutely love! You can go from playing sounds that span outer space or shake the earth like Sabbath! My favorite is combining it with my Gibson goldtop baritone Explorer.
Album You Listened to Most: Avenged Sevenfold's *Life Is But a Dream* and Avatar's *Dance Devil Dance*. Avenged set out to break the old rules while Avatar invented some new ones!
Guitarist of the Year: Synyster Gates. His reinvention and his ability to expand the limits of the instrument on their latest album is otherworldly and dangerous.

ZACH MYERS (SHINEDOWN)

Song: "Church," Jelly Roll
Riff: "This Ain't It," Jason Isbell & the 400 Unit
Solo: "Other Side of the Rainbow," Nuno Bettencourt
New Band: Dirty Honey
New Guitarist: John Notto
New Gear: Martin D-18 StreetLegend
Guitar moment: U2 opening the Sphere [*in Las Vegas*], and the Edge's tone on "Mysterious Ways"
Album You Listened to Most: *Wildflowers* by Tom Petty
Guitarist of the Year: Dustie Waring

TREY PEMBERTON (CREEPING DEATH)

Song: "Freedom Denied" by Skourge
Riff: "Blast Furnace" by Fugitive; specifically the riff at 2:33
Solo: Alluvial, "Bog Dweller" (Wes Hauch)
Guitar Moment: Judiciary, "Knife in the Dirt" (Israel Garza)
New Band: Tribal Gaze
New Guitarist: Quintin Stauts/Ian Kilmer of Tribal Gaze
New Gear: TW Smith Guitars Victor X
Album You Listened to Most: *Make Them Beg for Death* by Dying Fetus
Guitarist of the Year: Wes Hauch from Alluvial

RAFAEL BITTENCOURT (ANGRA)

Song: "Reimagined" by Contortionist
Riff: "Stranded" by Gojira's Christian Andreu
Solo: "When Words Fail" by Andy Timmons
Guitar Moment: Matteo Mancuso going off on Instagram.
New Band: Leprous
New Guitarist: Mateus Asato
New Gear: Boss Waza-Air BT headphones
Album You Listened to Most: *Clairvoyant* by Contortionist
Guitarist of the Year: Mateus Asato

NUNO BETTENCOURT

New Gear: I added a Boss Octave pedal that does an octave up. The reason I was excited about the pedal is that I used it on the "Rise" solo, which a lot of people have not noticed. I use it on the second half of the palm-muting sequence of the solo, set at a very light level — at an octave higher. It gives it an almost synthetic feel, like a synthesizer is playing with me. I also mixed and matched my string gauges with the high strings from a .09-gauge set on my E to G, and my D to low E is from .10s — with the low E a 52. So [it's] 52-44-30-16-11-09.

NILI BROSH

Song: "Rise" by Extreme
Favorite Riff: "Rise" by Extreme's Nuno Bettencourt
Favorite Solo: Once again, "Rise." It complements a killer song!
Guitar Moment: The return of the Crossroads Guitar Festival
New Band: Sophie Burrell's BXRRELL
New Guitarist: Matteo Mancuso
New Gear: Ibanez RG5170B in black with gold hardware. I got it for the Dethklok tour, and it ended up being one of the most reliable and easy-to-play guitars I've ever owned.
Album You Listened to Most: *Six* by Extreme
Guitarist of the Year: I know I've been beating you guys over the head with the same answer, but I truly believe Nuno has made a huge statement this year to remind us how much he still has to say!

JOHN MATOS (ABIOTIC)

Song: Cynic, "How Could I" (from *ReFocus*)
Riff: The Zenith Passage, "Algorithmic Salvation"
Solo: Nuno Bettencourt on Extreme's "Rise"
Guitar Moment: The Zenith Passage, "Algorithmic Salvation"
New Band: Myth of I
New Guitarist: Navene Koperweis
New Gear: Strandberg RESQ:D guitar
Album You Listened to Most: Entheos, *Time Will Take Us All*
Guitarist of the Year: Paul Masvidal

THE BEST OF 2023

Mötley Crüe's Nikki Sixx [*left*] and John 5 do their thing in Sheffield, England, May 22, 2023

ANTHONY DEVLIN/GETTY IMAGES FOR LIVE NATION UK

NITA STRAUSS

Song: "The Void" by Spiritbox
Riff: "Lux Æterna" by Metallica's James Hetfield
Solo: "Nobody" by Avenged Sevenfold's Synyster Gates
Guitar Moment: Demi Lovato releasing "Sorry Not Sorry (Rock Version)" with a ripping solo by Slash.
New Band: Crossbone Skully
New Guitarist: Anna Cara
New Gear: Shure GLX-D+
Album You Listened to Most: *Foregone* by In Flames
Guitarist of the Year: Too many to name!

MARK TREMONTI

Song: "Take a Bow" by Mammoth WVH. I love the hook, and the solo is great. To know Wolfie played the original Frankenstein guitar and used one of Eddie's early-days Marshall heads and cabinets makes it much more special.
Riff: "Right?" by Mammoth WVH. [*Wolfgang*] has a great riff that kicks off that song and the album.
Solo: "Drop D" by Matteo Mancuso
Guitar Moment: I know it was last year, but Wolfie playing Van Halen at the Taylor Hawkins tribute at Wembley Stadium is still the guitar moment of the year.
New Guitarist: Nat Myers
New Gear: The [*PRS*] MT100. You haven't experienced it yet, so you'll have to take my word for it. I'm sure you'll feel like I do once it is released.
Album You Listened to Most: *Mammoth II* by Mammoth WVH
Guitarist of the Year: Matteo Mancuso

SOPHIE LLOYD

Song: "Rescued" by Foo Fighters
Riff: "Eyes of a Panther" by Steel Panther's Satchel
Solo: "Nobody" by Avenged Sevenfold's Synyster Gates
Guitar Moment: Every moment with John 5 in Mötley Crüe on their EU festival run — especially his *a capella* solo.
New Band: Scene Queen
New Guitarist: Hannah Collins
New Gear: Neural DSP Quad Cortex
Album You Listened to Most: *Impera* by Swedish band Ghost.
Guitarist of the Year: John 5

ERIC JOHANSON

Song: Rival Sons' "Mirrors" off their new record, *Darkfighter*
Riff: "72 Seasons" by Metallica. James Hetfield is, hands down, the riff king.
Solo: "Staring at the Sun" by Duane Betts featuring Derek Trucks. They both do some beautiful playing on it, and it's a really uplifting sound.
Guitar Moment: I've got to be self-indulgent on this one and say that my favorite guitar moment has been jamming with Samantha Fish during her encore night after night.
New Band: Duel from Austin. I enjoy listening to them when we're on tour.
New Guitarist: Leilani Kilgore. She's the real deal.
New Gear: There's a custom builder from Nashville making guitars under the name Music City Custom Guitars. He has brought me a few of his [*creations*], and one is a semi-hollow Explorer. That's the one.
Album You Listened to Most: *In Times New Roman...* by Queens of the Stone Age
Guitarist of the Year: Joe Bonamassa. His new live album is just great, and he really is just a force to be reckoned with in blues guitar.

EDDIE 9V

Song: "Hold Out Your Hand," the Greyhounds
Riff: "So Far So Good," Cody Matlock
Solo: "How Long" by Eddie 9V (It wasn't me. It was my guitar player, Dusty McCook!)
New Band: The War & Treaty
New Guitarist: Michael Trotter Jr.
New Gear: Shure SM7DB microphone
Album You Listened to Most: *It's Too Late to Stop Now, Vol. I* by Van Morrison
Guitarist of the Year: Xavier Lynn

GRETCHEN MENN

Song: "Ghost Inside a Frame" by Angela Petrilli is incredibly moving and haunting.
Riff: "'69 Stingray" by Dear Groove Band. Classic, heavy rock by my Zepparella sister Holly West.

Solo: "Lavender Mountains" by Nili Brosh
New Band: Tripliciti with Andy McKee, Trevor Gordon Hall and Calum Graham
New Gear: I'm a bit biased, but my Breedlove custom acoustic.
Guitar Moment: All the musicians at Andy McKee's Musicarium: Jon Gomm, Mike Dawes, Plini, Muriel Anderson, Trevor Gordon Hall, Calum Graham, Andy McKee, Stanley Jordan. They were all so incredibly inspiring.
Album You Listened to Most: Daniele Gottardo, *INkBlot*. It's a masterpiece of composition, in a world of its own.
Guitarist of the Year: Daniele Gottardo

HERMAN LI (DRAGONFORCE)

Song: "Light and Darkness" by Babymetal
Riff: I can't pick!
Solo: Nuno Bettencourt's solo from "Rise" by Extreme
Guitar Moment: Dave Mustaine kicking out security guards at his show for hitting a fan.
New Band: Angus McSix
New Guitarist: Every guitarist who just started playing, working hard and practicing.
New Gear: My PRS Custom Build Private Stock Guitar
Album You Listened to Most: *Six* by Extreme
Guitarist of the Year: Tim Henson

DAN PIEPER (CLASSLESS ACT)

Song: "Pass the Nirvana" by Pierce the Veil
Riff: "Negative Space" by Queens of the Stone Age's Josh Homme
Solo: "Victorious" by Nita Strauss (feat. Dorothy)
Guitar Moment: How the riff in "Time and Place" by Queens of the Stone Age feels when the drums kick in.
New Band: The Struts
New Guitarist: Griffin Tucker
New Gear: Kramer's '84 Hot Dogger
Album You Listened to Most: *Jaws of Life* by Pierce the Veil
Guitarist of the Year: Nita Strauss

MARTY FRIEDMAN

Song: "Mononofu Nippon" by Momoiro Clover Z
Riff: "Gravity" by TM Revolution, or any of the many riffs in "Diabolical Majesty" by Revocation!
Solo: "The Fuel" by Naoki Morioka
Guitar Moment: The Jackson American Virtuoso video!
New Band: Suspended 4th
New Guitarist: Ichika Nito
New Gear: The new TH-U Marty Friedman signature plugin pack
Album You Listened to Most: *Take Me Back to Eden* by Sleep Token
Guitarist of the Year: Way too many to list!

JACKIE PARRY (DIANTHUS)

Song: "The Dirt I'm Buried In" by Avatar
Riff: The intro to "The Storm Upstairs" by Cattle Decapitation
Solo: I found a guitar player on YouTube called Landon Siebens, who wrote a solo to "Take Me Back to Eden" by Sleep Token. The original song doesn't have a solo, but what he added sounds phenomenal! Check it out on YouTube.
Guitar Moment: The solo from "I'm Alright" by Mammoth WVH. When I watched the music video for this, that moment was just so epic. Wolfgang is really carrying the torch for his father. He would be so proud to see him now and how well he is doing with his band.
New Band: Loathe
New Guitarist: Andrew O'Connor of Lorna Shore
New Gear: Neural DSP's Quad Cortex
Album You Listened to Most: *Foregone* by In Flames
Guitarist of the Year: Ola Englund

SONIA ANUBIS (COBRA SPELL)

Song: "Keeper of the Celestial Flame of Abernethy" by Gloryhammer
Riff: "Mr. Know It All" by Hitten
Solo: "Act VIII: Palingenesis" by Joaco Luis of SerapiS Project
Guitar Moment: Marty Friedman playing live with Megadeth at Wacken 2023
New Band: SerapiS Project
New Guitarist: Adri Funérailles
New Gear: Jackson USA Custom Shop Warrior Blood Drip guitar
Album You Listened to Most: *Return of the Kingdom of Fife* by Gloryhammer
Guitarist of the Year: Sophie Burrell

TREV LUKATHER

Song: "Minor Setback" by GUM. All vibe! It has a solid groove and a synth bass riff that forces the stink face.
Riff: I just came across Dirty Honey's new tune, "Won't Take Me Alive." It feels like a heavy Stevie Wonder riff. I'm a sucker for funk rock riffs. Made the head bop!
Solo: Mateus Asato ripping over the Band Camino's "Last Man in the World." He's become a new friend, and I'm in awe of his playing. He's a humble gem of a human.
New Band: Betcha. Great band with great songs. They deserve more attention. I don't know them personally, but I'd love to work with them. I know we could create some magic together.
New Guitarist: Isaiah Sharkey. Wow. This guy is on another level. He's got licks for days but a pocket groove that is alien. Please give him a listen. He toured with John Mayer and a ton of others. Sharkey, you're a beast!
New Gear: Not so new, but the Line 6 Helix. It's a lifesaver. It's an incredible piece of gear that gives me unlimited freedom to build live sounds part by part for each song without having an anxiety-filled pedal board.
Album You Listened to Most: It's not new, but *Morning View* by Incubus. I blasted this album front to back a few times throughout the year. It still holds up like it was re-released in 2023. It was ahead of its time, but lucky enough, people got it back when.
Guitarist of the Year: Lari Basilio, an

[*left*] Rival Sons' Jay Buchanan and Scott Holiday perform in Birmingham, England, October 17, 2023

[*right*] Dirty Honey's Justin Smolian and John Notto on stage in Santa Cruz, California, October 7, 2022

unreal guitarist who bleeds taste. Every solo I hear blows me away. She can shred, but she is melodic through and through. Hands down, one of the best around.

EMILY WOLFE

Song: "Emotion Sickness" by Queens of the Stone Age
Riff: The bit commander riff in "Hard to Love" by Bully
Solo: The slide guitar part in "Emotion Sickness" by Queens of the Stone Age
Guitar Moment: The post-chorus guitar riff in "Sweet and Sour America" by Demob Happy
New Band: Middle Kids
New Guitarist: Yvette Young
New Gear: Ibanez mini analog delay
Album You Listened to Most: *Lucky for You* by Bully
Guitarist of the Year: Alicia Bognanno from Bully

ZAKK WYLDE

Song: "You Made Me Want to Live" by Black Label Society
Riff: "Destroy & Conquer" by Black Label Society
Solo: Dario Lorina on "Destroy & Conquer"
Guitar Moment: Nuno Bettencourt's guitar on the entire new Extreme album, *Six*
New Band: Ritchie Faulkner's Elegant Weapons
New Guitarist: Jared James Nichols
New Gear: Wylde Audio's Iron Works Barbarian
Album You Listened to Most: *Doom Crew Inc.* by Black Label Society
Guitarist of the Year: Nuno Bettencourt, 100 percent!

JARED JAMES NICHOLS

Song: "Emotion Sickness" by Queens of the Stone Age
Riff: "Shinier in the Dark" by Royal Blood
Solo: "Hope You Realize It" by Joe Bonamassa
New Guitarist: Lari Basilio
New Gear: Epiphone Blues Power Les Paul
Album You Listened to Most: King's X, *Dogman*
Guitarist of the Year: Mateus Asato

MYLES KENNEDY (ALTER BRIDGE)

Song: "Someday in the Rain" by MJT the Band
Riff: "Nobody" by Avenged Sevenfold's Synyster Gates
Solo: "Take a Bow" by Mammoth WVH
Guitar Moment: "Hangers On" — specifically the outro solo — by Big Wreck's Ian Thornley
New Band: MJT the Band
New Guitarist: David Godfrey of MJT the Band
New Gear: The signature guitar PRS designed for me!
Album You Listened to Most: *Where You Wish You Were* by Bill Laurance and Michael League
Guitarist of the Year: Julian Lage

WAYNE SERMON (IMAGINE DRAGONS)

Song: "What Was I Made For?" by Billie Eilish
Riff: The vocal loop on James Blake's "Big Hammer"
Solo: Julian Lage on "Etude"
Guitar Moment: Any YouTube video of Steven Seagal talking about or playing guitar
New Band: boygenius
New Guitarist: Joey Landreth. He's new to me — and he's a monster!
New Gear: JHS Colour Box V2
Album You Listened to Most: *But Here We Are* by Foo Fighters
Guitarist of the Year: Julian Lage

GRAYSON STEWART (NORMA JEAN)

Song: "Celebration" by the Dirty Nil
Riff: "Emotion Sickness" by QOTSA
Solo: "Poison for the Lost" by Sylosis
Guitar Moment: Zakk Wylde playing with Pantera in place of Dimebag
New Band: Final Gasp
New Guitarist: Kayla Kent
New Gear: Walrus Audio Melee
Album You Listened to Most: City and Colour's *The Love Still Held Me Near*
Guitarist of the Year: Josh Middleton of Sylosis

KATJA OGRIN/REDFERNS (SONS) STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY IMAGES (HONEY)

TRAVIS STEVER (COHEED AND CAMBRIA)

Song: Peter Gabriel's "Panopticom"
Riff: Mutoid Man's "Call of the Void"
Solo: Numerous solos on the Jason Isbell & the 400 Unit album, *Weathervanes*
Guitar Moment: Watching Stephen Carpenter from Deftones in action this past summer.
New Band: Teen Mortgage
New Guitarist: James Guile of Teen Mortgage
New Gear: Anything by Bowman Audio Endeavors
Album You Listened to the Most: Jason Isbell & the 400 Unit's *Weathervanes*
Guitarist of the Year: Joe Walsh forever, especially with the Eagles on tour for the last time.

MATT HEAFY (TRIVIUM)

Song: "Glacial Domination" by Frozen Soul
Riff: Raijin and Fujin intro theme on *Ryujin*
Solo: Raijin and Fujin solo on "Ryujin"
Guitar Moment: The intro from "Abominable" by Frozen Soul
Favorite New Band: Frozen Soul
New Guitarist: Michael Munday and Chris Bonner from Frozen Soul
New Gear: My three different 1/1 Half Sumo x Kiichi Gibson Les Pauls
Album You Listened to Most: Ryujin's self-titled album, *Ryujin*
Guitarist of the Year: Ryoji Shinamoto

JOHN NOLAN (TAKING BACK SUNDAY)

Song: "Mourning" by Post Malone. I love this song so much.
Riff: "Dumbest Girl Alive" by 100 gecs. I didn't know much about 100 gecs until this year, and I'm still unsure how much I know. You wouldn't expect them to have one of the best guitar riffs of 2023, but they do.
Solo: "Paper Machete" by Queens of the Stone Age. QOTSA have always had a stylistic approach to solos that I love. They keep that tradition alive in this one.
New Gear: Polara Reverb pedal by Digi-Tech. I got it a few years ago, and it changed my guitar sound. It's all over our new album [152], and I incorporate it into live performances in ways I never would've anticipated.
Album You Listened to Most: *Cracker Island* by Gorillaz. I'm a big fan of the Gorillaz album *Demon Days* and sporadically kept up with them through the years. I recently played my son a few Gorillaz songs, and he loved them; After that, he dove into their entire catalog. When *Cracker Island* came out, we were both so ready for it.
Guitarist of the Year: Paul Simon is one of the great underrated guitar players. What he does isn't flashy and doesn't draw attention to itself, but it's always proficient and perfect for the song. When you listen to his new album, *Seven Psalms*, it's clear he does something as a guitarist that almost no one else can.

SAMMY BOLLER

Song: Trevor Hall's "Losing You"
Riff: Erra's "Snowblood"
Solo: Mammoth WVH's "Take a Bow"
Guitar Moment: John Mayer reuniting with the Trio
New Band: Mac Saturn
New Guitarist: Jesse Cash
New Gear: Friedman IRX
Album You Listened to Most: *The Record* by boygenius
Guitarist of the Year: Tim Henson

MARCOS CURIEL (P.O.D.)

Riff: Lamb of God's "Ditch"
Song: "Show Me How" by Men I Trust
Solo: L'lndecis Aong's "Soulful." It's at 2:10, and it's amazing.
Guitar Moment: Tracking P.O.D.'s latest album, *Veritas*
New Band: The Oxymorons
New Guitarist: Ryan Clapham of Cannons
New Gear: Radial BigShot ABY True-bypass Switcher pedal
Album You Listened to Most: *Fever Dream* by Cannons
Guitarist of the Year: Ichika Nito

DANTE FRISIELLO (STEVE VAI)

Song: "Creation" by Seven Lions
Riff: "The Glass Bead Game" by Plini
Solo: Guthrie Govan live with Hans Zimmer doing the *Top Gun* theme
Guitar Moment: Alex Lifeson coming out with a new signature Les Paul
New Band: Angel Vivaldi's band, Infinity's Ashes
New Guitarist: Baxty
New Gear: Abasi Concepts Emi
Album You Listened to Most: *Dive* by Tycho
Guitarist of the Year: There are too many to choose from, but Steve Vai is killing it on tour.

JENNIFER BATTEN (EX JEFF BECK/MICHAEL JACKSON)

Song: "The Joke," as done by Benicio Bryant on *America's Got Talent*.
Riff: The stretchy, muted passage that Nuno does on Extreme's "Rise." It's at 2:50 in the video version.
Solo: Several of Reb Beach's live moments from Winger's 2023 tour. Check them out on YouTube!
Guitar Moment: Giacomo Turra's "Coffee Music" on TikTok. You'll know it's the right video if he's wearing a yellow tank top.
New Band: Berried Alive
New Guitarist: Giacomo Turra
New Gear: Suhr Modern Antique (used, but new to me) and the latest model of Shure wireless systems, GLXD16+.
Album You Listened to Most: *On Matters of Searching* by That Buzz Girl from TikTok, known as Buzz on Spotify/Apple
Guitarist of the Year: Andy Timmons

STEVE MORSE

Song: "Push" by Trevor Rabin
Riff: Several from Trevor Rabin on *Rio*; too many to name
Solo: "Rise" by Nuno was incredible.
Guitar Moment: Seeing John Petrucci with Dave LaRue and Mike Portnoy. He's always incredible.
New Band: Conrad Schrenk Extravaganza
New Guitarist: He's new to me... Conrad Schrenk.
New Gear: The [*GigRig.com*] Wetter Box. It allows remote mix control of effects such as delay or reverb.
Album You Listened to Most: *Rio* by Trevor Rabin
Guitarist of the Year: Andy Wood GW

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UBISOFT

THE GUITARISTS OF THE YEAR

"As I was doing the [*new*] album, I was re-inspired to kind of go for blood again," Nuno Bettencourt told us. "I basically said, 'I want to bring guitar playing back'"

GUITAR WORLD'S EDITORS AND WRITERS SELECT 2023'S GAME-CHANGERS AND TASTEMAKERS

Nuno Bettencourt
Wolfgang Van Halen
Josh Klinghoffer
Andrew Watt
The Rolling Stones
John 5
Cory Wong
Sophie Lloyd
Nita Strauss
Zakk Wylde
Buddy Guy
Periphery
Steve Lacy
Vernon Reid
Joe Bonamassa
Tom DeLonge
John Osborne
Synyster Gates
Graham Coxon
Josh Homme
& Troy Van Leeuwen

Compiled by **GUITAR WORLD STAFF**
Words by **ALISON RICHTER, ANDREW DALY, CHRIS GILL, AMIT SHARMA & DAMIAN FANELLI**

JAIME BALLERSTEROS

THE BEST OF 2023

NUNO BETTENCOURT

IN APRIL OF this year, an always gun-slinging, Washburn N4-brandishing, unapologetically candid Nuno Bettencourt told *Guitar World*, "As I was doing the album [*2023's* Six], I was re-inspired to kind of go for blood again. I basically said, 'I want to bring guitar playing back,'" before adding, "I just wanted to make [*guitar*] fun again." Well, as we round out the year, it's safe to say that Nuno clearly understood his self-imposed assignment.

Since late 2020, we've suffered from a lack of Edward Van Halen. Then our despair grew deeper when we lost Jeff Beck at the start of 2023. But with a flick of his magic wand and no warning, Nuno stood in the shadows alongside Rihanna during the halftime show for Super Bowl LVII. Then and there, Nuno had us; we were transfixed, thinking, "Was that Nuno Bettencourt?" before saying, "OK, yes, it was. But what now?" Turns out that beneath piles of 15-years-in-the-making fairy dust was "Rise," featuring a God-like solo that transported us back to Nuno's 1992 MVP year, aka the year of his last *Guitar World* cover (until his August 2023 cover, that is). How about that?

Sure, back when Nuno was 26, it was obvious that he'd not only be on a *GW* cover but be crowned the MVP. But entering 2023, especially seeing as Extreme hadn't been heard from in 15 years, Bettencourt was mostly thought of as just another guitarist within screaming distance of 60. We guess Nuno didn't get the memo, as he curb-stomped his way through 2023 with the same balls-to-the-wall guts that made him famous back when "More Than Words" was a thing. And so, is Nuno *still* the MVP? Absolutely. Has he inherited the throne from EVH? Probably. And yes, Nuno did bring guitar back to the forefront. But Nuno isn't just an MVP or the heir to the throne; he's a no-brainer as a 2023 GOTY.

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

AFTER DEBUTING ON our GOTY list and the [*January 2023*] cover of *Guitar World*, Wolfgang Van Halen reclaims a top spot with the release of his second Mammoth WVH album, *Mammoth II*, support slots on tour with Metallica and Alter Bridge, a collaboration with Slash on "I'm Just Ken", as featured on the soundtrack to *Barbie* — and his first headline tour with support from returning GOTY, Nita Strauss.

Guitar solos are more prominent and plentiful on *Mammoth II* than they were on the debut album, showcasing Wolfgang's impressive chops and emerging distinctive voice. The highlight is his 90-second solo on "Take a Bow" — a strong contender for solo of the year — where moody, bluesy bends build up to a frenzied fury of fretboard tapping. Wolf recorded the solo playing his dad's legendary Frankenstein guitar and "number one" Marshall. "It was a very emotional moment for me to play that solo with Pop's guitar and amp," he says. "It was like he was there with me in the studio."

While we're at it, next year looks even bigger for Wolfgang. In addition to Mammoth WVH's ongoing headline tour, his band will open several shows on the Foo Fighters' "Everything Or Nothing At All" stadium tour this summer. But the most exciting news is the upcoming, long-awaited release of the very first EVH guitar model developed completely under his own input and direction, the EVH SA-126 semi-acoustic electric. For more about Van Halen, head to page 64.

JOSH KLINGHOFFER

SINCE PARTING WAYS with the Red Hot Chili Peppers in 2019, Josh Klinghoffer has worked nonstop, touring with Pearl Jam as opening act and band member, with Eddie Vedder's solo project, guesting onstage with Jane's Addiction, joining the band to sub for a recuperating Dave Navarro and working with Iggy Pop. He also records solo projects as Pluralone, releasing three albums to date: *To Be One with You*, *I Don't Feel Well* and his latest, *This Is the Show*.

Speaking with *Guitar World*, Klinghoffer offered some thoughts about his playing, range of opportunities and bosses who seemingly just can't get enough of him. "I think it's a combination of a lot of things," he said. "Some of it's pure luck and timing, but I also think it might have something to do with my thirst for musical knowledge. I love other people's music, but I don't try to emulate anybody's playing. I've never lost this sense that I'm a beginner, and I think that gives me a more primal approach to the guitar, and perhaps that makes my playing sound individualistic. Also, I never really lost the fan side of me... I think that's part of what carries me through."

ANDREW WATT

EVER SINCE OZZY Osbourne's 2020 album, *Ordinary Man*, Andrew Watt has been in consistently high demand as a side musician and producer. Among his latest accomplishments: producing new albums by Pearl Jam, the Rolling Stones and Iggy Pop and performing with the all-star Iggy Pop and the Losers — Josh Klinghoffer, Duff McKagan and Chad Smith — on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*.

"I've been very lucky to get together with people that take me for who I am," Watt told us in 2020, when he appeared next to Ozzy on our May 2020 cover. "They let me play guitar and they let me come in with a guitar player's mentality and sit down with them and write in that way. And when I'm approaching a song

[*from left*] The Rolling Stones' Ronnie Wood, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards on stage in Brussels in July 2022; Josh Klinghoffer [*P90s and Bigsby*] shares the stage with Andrew Watt [*humbuckers*] in Dana Point, California, September 30, 2023; Mötley Crüe's John 5 and Nikki Sixx share the spotlight on our October 2023 cover

ERIC LALMAND/BELGA MAG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES (STONES) JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC (JOSH/WATT) FUTURE (GW)

in general, it always starts with a guitar for me, because that's just how it's always been. I count my lucky blessings that I'm still making music the exact same way I was making it when I was 10."

How do the artists he works with feel about him? "[*Watt*] brought in exactly what we needed," the Stones' Keith Richards recently told *Guitar Player*. "He knew our stuff back to front, and I think he had a ball making the Stones' record. It was fun to make, very quick, compared to a lot of our records. We did most of it in a month or two. I enjoyed working with him."

THE ROLLING STONES

SPEAKING OF RICHARDS, in October the Rolling Stones released *Hackney Diamonds*, their first album of original material since 2005's *A Bigger Bang*. The band — with that Andrew Watt guy at the helm — tracked at Henson Recording Studios in Los Angeles, Metropolis in London, Sanctuary Studios in Nassau, Bahamas, Electric Lady Studios and The Hit Factory/Germano Studios in New York City. The interesting thing about the album is, *it's pretty damn good*, as evidenced by tracks like "Get Close," "Tell Me Straight" and "Sweet Sounds of Heaven," the latter of which features a completely unexpected (and completely awesome) guest appearance by Lady Gaga. ("She's one of the Stones now," Richards told *Guitar Player*.) The album also features appearances by Elton John, Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney, Bill Wyman and, of course, the late Charlie Watts.

JOHN 5

AS A FEW of you, um, might have heard by now, John 5 joined Mötley Crüe this year — adding to an already diverse resume that includes Rob Zombie, Marilyn Manson, David Lee Roth, Rod Stewart and k.d. lang. Basically, this is as momentous — and as exciting for the person involved — as Noel Gallagher being asked to join the *Anthology*-era Beatles in 1994.

"I envision staying with Mötley Crüe," John told *Guitar World* (when he earned his first bona fide *GW* cover appearance). As long as Mötley Crüe are around, I don't plan on leaving — and I hope I never get fired. It's such a wonderful band to be in. It really is a dream to be playing with your friends. It's something I never envisioned, but I'm so thankful it's happened. I know every single song. That's the other thing; I didn't have to learn any songs. I know them all. To get a new chapter, a new beginning in your life — what a gift it is. It's hard to explain. It's such an epiphany to receive a gift like this, to go, 'OK, here we go.'"

Mr. 5 also introduced his latest Fender signature model, the limited-edition Ghost Tele. →

THE BEST OF 2023

CORY WONG

WITH SO MUCH going on — a YouTube variety show, his Wong Notes podcast, being a member of the Fearless Flyers, recording almost a dozen solo albums, teaching online and maybe getting some sleep — Cory Wong found time to introduce another signature Fender Stratocaster in 2023.

"I've wanted to release my Stratocaster in other colors since the original Sapphire Blue Transparent version was released in 2021," Wong said in a PR statement. "I'm a visual person and I believe the look of a guitar can affect the approach one takes to playing it. With the release of these two new colors, my goal was to provide players with a guitar that exudes a bright, fun energy."

"Fun energy" is key in Wong's playing. As he told *Total Guitar*, "My right hand is constantly going like the pistons running in an engine. No matter what, I'm always going down and up in 16ths, and my hand is always moving, whether I hit any notes or not. I never have to think about the strumming pattern; I think about the rhythm. That's what dictates how I play the pattern."

Whatever he's doing, it's clearly working. This year saw Wong embark on the biggest international shows of his career, visiting legendary venues like the 5,300-capacity Eventim Apollo in London with his solo band Vulfpeck, the funk collective who arguably helped launch him into the spotlight.

SOPHIE LLOYD

LLOYD SPENT HER year touring the U.S. and Europe with Machine Gun Kelly, recording and releasing a new solo album, *Imposter Syndrome*, and earning a cover story — including an actual cover — in *Guitar World*.

"It's interesting that I've been able to enter touring at such a high level," she told *GW*'s Joe Bosso. "People always say, 'You haven't paid your dues,' but I feel as though I've done that in a different way." To which *GW* editor-in-chief Damian Fanelli replied (in the September 2023 Woodshed column), "I very much agree. And what does 'paying your dues' even mean in 2023? Isn't building a massive online following over the course of several years paying your dues? Isn't somehow shifting from the digital empire onto major stages like MSG, Wembley Arena and the weirdly named KFC Yum! Center paying your dues? Lloyd's is definitely a unique story, and although I have zero inside information, I can promise you that her ongoing stint with Machine Gun Kelly is still just the beginning."

[*from left*] Sophie Lloyd (with her new Kiesel signature model) during the photo shoot for our September 2023 issue; Buddy Guy joins his band onstage in San Francisco, August 6, 2023; Steve Lacy performs in Reading, England, August 27, 2023

NITA STRAUSS

NITA STRAUSS ENJOYED a banner 2023. She picked up right where she left off in Alice Cooper's band following a stint with Demi Lovato, released and toured a new solo album, *The Call of the Void*, and wrapped things up on the road with Mammoth WVH. She also found herself on the cover of practically every guitar magazine, including, once again, *Guitar World*.

The Call of the Void marked a departure for Strauss, taking her from solely instrumental work to collaborations with a variety of vocalists. As for its final track, "Surfacing," she roped in ex-Megadeth and Cacophony legend Marty Friedman. "Talk about a storyteller!" she said. "I've learned so much from Marty over the years. He knows what he wants. This collaboration was such an education for me, as a sort-of young guitar player at the foot of the master! The first metal song I ever heard had Marty playing guitar on it. I *wanted* him to critique me... He would tell me how I could make melodies better and what notes I should use instead of the ones I'd initially chosen. I came out the other side a better player. He sent pages of detailed notes and through him I learned you have to know what your story is and what you're trying to say or convey. Pick phrases that help tell the story. Resist the temptation to use your songs to show off your fastest licks."

ZAKK WYLDE

MANY OF THIS year's GOTYs could easily qualify for a 2023 "Wrath of the Internet" list. Zakk Wylde is no stranger to the pack since taking on guitar duties as part of what some call a Pantera and/or Dimebag Darrell tribute/celebration tour and others call a variety of other names unsuitable for print.

For Wylde, bringing Pantera's legacy to old and new fans is a responsibility not taken lightly. "At the end of the day, I'm far beyond honored that I got asked to help to celebrate the incredible greatness of Saint Dime and Saint Vinnie," he told *Guitar World*. "I guess you could say I'm on a mission from God, just like Jake and Elwood! Joking aside, we're just four friends celebrating our buddies' memory and the amazing thing they created that brings so many people joy and happiness — just like their heroes did. That's why we still listen to Randy, Eddie, Sabbath, Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix and Pantera — because it brings you to your happy place. It's a beautiful thing and to me, every show we've done in honor of Dime and Vinnie has been beyond special. Far beyond..."

That would be enough to keep most guitar players busy, but not Wylde. MXR celebrated their 20-year relationship with the Ozzy Osbourne gunslinger by releasing an updated line of his signature pedals. He also resurrected tribute band Zakk Sabbath, who began their first tour in three years just before the holiday season. And he announced one of the most striking Wylde Audio designs yet in the IronWorks Barbarian, which — at least to our eyes — looks like the hellborn love child of a Zemaitis and an SG. Like we said, the man just doesn't stop.

BUDDY GUY

AT 87 YEARS of age, blues icon Buddy Guy is still going strong, performing 150 shows every year, making guest appearances and recording new music. Last year's *The Blues Don't Lie* is his 34th studio album, following 2018's Grammy-winning *The Blues Is Alive and Well*.

This year, Guy joined Eric Clapton's Crossroads Guitar Festival all-star lineup and announced his farewell tour. "I don't want to cheat people," he told *Guitar World*. "I have a reputation for giving 100 percent, but I'm 87 now, and I can't kick my leg as high as I did when I was 27. I'll still do blues festivals and one-offs, but I can't tour the world anymore. I'm too old to be jumpin' from town to town on a bus. I'll still be playing guitar; I'll do that until I can't. And I'll keep making music, but I'm at the age where my heroes passed away. I've gotta keep that in mind... I remember listening to some of my heroes when they got older and thinking it wasn't the same. I don't want someone coming away from my show thinking, 'He doesn't sound any good.'"

PERIPHERY

PERIPHERY, FEATURING GUITAR triple-threat Misha Mansoor, Jake Bowen and Mark Holcomb, released their first album in four years. Titled *Periphery V: Djent Is Not a Genre*, the nine tracks were produced by the band and released via their 3DOT Recording label. Speaking with *Total Guitar*, the trio dug into the band's approach to songwriting and recording, as well as the challenges they faced to surpass their own high expectations following 2019's *Periphery IV: Hail Stan*.

"We've written a lot of stuff and the bar gets raised. We'd like to elevate that every time," Mansoor said. "I was personally very proud of *Periphery IV*, so much so that I didn't know how we were going to beat that."

Mansoor also composed, assembled talent and performed in the mind-boggling "The Virtuoso Mega Shred," a promotional track and video for Jackson Guitars' latest American Series model, the Virtuoso. He was joined by Marty Friedman, Revocaton's Dave Davidson, Heriot's Debbie Gough and Erra's Clint Tustin.

STEVE LACY

STEVE LACY HAS an A-to-Z list of studio musician and producer credits, including Kendrick Lamar, Thundercat, Vampire Weekend, Calvin Harris, Solange Knowles and Tyler, the Creator. That's in addition to a pair of solo albums — 2019's *Apollo XXI* and 2022's *Gemini Rights* — plus a Grammy win for last year's work and a hit single, "Bad Habit." He also introduced his signature Fender Stratocaster, the People Pleaser, which was reviewed in our August issue.

Asked by GuitarWorld.com about the →

JEN ROSENSTEIN (LLOYD) STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY IMAGES (GUY) MARK HOLLOWAY/REDFERNS (LACY)

key to getting so many callbacks, Lacy noted, "I think it's about being able to read the room. It's an intuitive thing to keep the energy flow going and make people feel comfortable, as well as having a little bit or enough talent to hold your own and present new ideas. You need to find compatibility and some type of synergy together. That's what keeps me going! I [*also*] think my openness helps. I'm not too afraid to present something or try something completely different. That's what I love about being a producer."

VERNON REID

LIVING COLOUR MAY still be working on the follow-up to their 2017 album *Shade*, but that wasn't enough to keep guitarist Vernon Reid quiet for the duration of 2023. The band were chosen to support Extreme on their big comeback tour, making it even more of a top-drawer event for rock enthusiasts and guitar lovers across the U.S. Reid also actively campaigned for underappreciated six-string legends like Robin Trower, Robert Cray and Mike Stern to gain more recognition on the social media platform X. "This situation is unacceptable," he wrote, while also observing how "Trower didn't have to play fast to be interesting or emotionally effective," and ultimately made you "feel the narrative" in an era where "vibrato has been practically abandoned as expressive ornamentation in favor of scalar exotica."

JOE BONAMASSA

BLUES AMBASSADOR JOE Bonamassa was everywhere in 2023. A partial overview: he performed at the Crossroads Festival, appeared with Black Country Communion bandmate Glenn Hughes at the Saban Theater in Beverly Hills, collaborated again with Scary Pockets for a cover of Madonna's "Like a Prayer," jammed with Brad Paisley at the Nashville Let Freedom Sing July 4 celebration, debuted another Epiphone signature guitar, hosted his "Live from Nerdville" podcast, created his "Tales from Nerdville" columns for *Guitar World*, maintained his two nonprofits (Keeping the Blues Alive and Fueling Musicians), joined Eric Gales, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram and Marcus King at Bluesfest in Australia, teamed with Joanne Shaw Taylor, Carmen Vandenberg and Josh Smith for a cover of B.B. King's "Ain't Nobody Home," and released a new album, *Blues Deluxe Vol. 2,* an homage to his milestone third studio album, *Blues Deluxe*, which turned 20 this year.

"If you had told me 20 years ago my career would last long enough to see the 20th anniversary of this little record called *Blues Deluxe*, I'm sure I would have laughed," he said. "*Blues Deluxe* was my last shot after being dropped by two major record labels and my booking agent. It was then that my manager, Roy Weisman, had his first 'all in' moment. We would go back into the studio and record a record that would hopefully define the direction of whatever future career I might have..."

TOM DeLONGE

TOM DELONGE'S MEATY, concert hall — and sonic spectrum — filling riffs speak to an entire generation, proving yet again that one need not be a virtuoso — subjective and overused term that it has become — in order to be a guitar "hero"... or to land on a GOTY list.

Late last year, Blink-182 fans' wishes and hopes came true when the band announced DeLonge's return to the fold, following months of speculation. The official word was followed by the release of "Edging," their first song as a trio in more than a decade, and *One More Time...* — their ninth studio album. They began a world tour that keeps them on the road through early 2024. Summer 2023 also saw the reissue — and quick sell-out — of DeLonge's in-demand signature Strat. The guitar was discontinued in 2004, leading to a cult following and peak prices on the resale market, particularly on the heels of his reunion with the band.

[*from left*] Vernon Reid performs with Living Colour in Detroit, August 14, 2023; Blink-182's Tom DeLonge with his re-introduced signature Fender Strat (which features a Seymour Duncan Invader humbucker); Avenged Sevenfold's Synyster Gates does his thing in Alpharetta, Georgia, September 20, 2023

JOHN OSBORNE

THIS YEAR SAW the release of a much-anticipated fourth album from Brothers Osborne. The self-titled project is their first since 2020's *Skeletons*. Drawing from rock, blues, country and bluegrass, the duo's sound is defined by rhythm guitarist T.J. Osborne's vocals and John Osborne playing lead.

In 2020, he told *Guitar World*, "It's very gratifying to know that guitarists are paying attention, but I can't think about blowing them away when I come up with a solo. That's a little like wagging the dog. I try to think big-picture when we're in the studio."

Integral to those solos, and the overall sound, is his guitar of choice: the Telecaster. "As simple of a design as the Telecaster is, it's the most versatile guitar out there," he told *Guitarist*. "It just works with any style, any amp, any pedal you put in front of it. The Telecaster works so well because it's just a guitar. When you add switches and knobs that do crazy things, you start getting away from the actual point of an electric guitar, which was to be loud enough to be heard over drums. Some guitars push you in a direction, and when you fight against it, it doesn't work as well. But the simplicity of the Telecaster allows you to find your voice. It's a desert island guitar."

SYNYSTER GATES

***LIFE IS BUT** a Dream*... is Avenged Sevenfold's first studio recording since 2016's *The Stage*. In addition to a long-awaited comeback, the album showcases why Synyster Gates ranks among *Guitar World*'s 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time, and Best Metal Guitarist in the World in *Total Guitar*. Gates is also prolific in classical and jazz guitar technique and theory.

In an interview with Minneapolis-based 93X Radio, he said, "When I was 30 I picked up a gypsy jazz guitar and I didn't put it down... Four years after that, when I was 34, I went fucking berserk and downloaded, absorbed, just consumed mass amounts of guitar nerd content. I did that for a few years there where I had a guitar in hand, even when I was on the road, from the minute I woke up until I went to the show and went to bed... I went down gnarly rabbit holes online, just trying to get my hands on every piece of technique, every piece of theory, every piece of songwriting — it was always very much from songwriting. I didn't stop playing guitar for three years."

GRAHAM COXON

CHOSEN AS ONE OF *Total Guitar*'s 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time, Graham Coxon once told that publication, "I think I'm more in the free-jazz world when it comes to lead playing, and I play physically. I like the sound of a guitar being thumped! I'd hear other people making rock albums that sounded really polished, but my records always sound like me: slightly shambolic and about to break. I cover my lack of technical ability with weird noises!"

This year was a mixture of old and new for Coxon: massive reunion shows from Blur (not to mention a brand-new Blur album, *The Ballad of Darren*) and a debut album from his new project, the WAEVE, with musical partner Rose Elinor Dougal.

As to the future of Blur, "Although we don't talk that much now when we get together, it's still very intuitive," he told GuitarWorld.com. "I'm not sure I'll ever be able to put my finger on the dynamic of Blur and I don't know if other sorts of musicians talk that much about what they're bringing into the music, especially if they are intuitive players and not hugely technical musicians. But I think we make it up as we go along. It's always been a bit more instinctive because I don't know any scales or anything; it's action painting for me. I don't really know what I'm gonna do from one moment to the next when it comes to Blur; I just let it happen as it will."

QOTSA'S JOSH HOMME & TROY VAN LEEUWEN

QUEENS OF THE Stone Age's Josh Homme and Troy Van Leeuwen made it onto the GOTY list together with a new album, *In Times New Roman...* — the band's eighth full-length studio album and their first since 2017's *Villains*.

For Homme, the period between albums was particularly challenging, as he faced cancer, divorce, rehab, grief and legal issues, all of which played into songwriting and recording. Speaking with *NME*, he said, "That's what this is. You start dropping the armor that protects you from your insecurities, and once you drop a piece of that armor you can't put it back on. I think on this journey of Queens of the Stone Age, there's no armor left. It's only about walking deeper into the darkness." GW

SCOTT LEGATO/GETTY IMAGES (REID) SEYMOUR DUNCAN/PRESS (DELONGE) PRINCE WILLIAMS/WIREIMAGE (GATES)

MASSIVE ATTACK

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN reveals the battle plan behind the huge sound of *Mammoth II*

WORDS BY
CHRIS GILL
PHOTO BY
RYAN PIORKOWSKI

EVH
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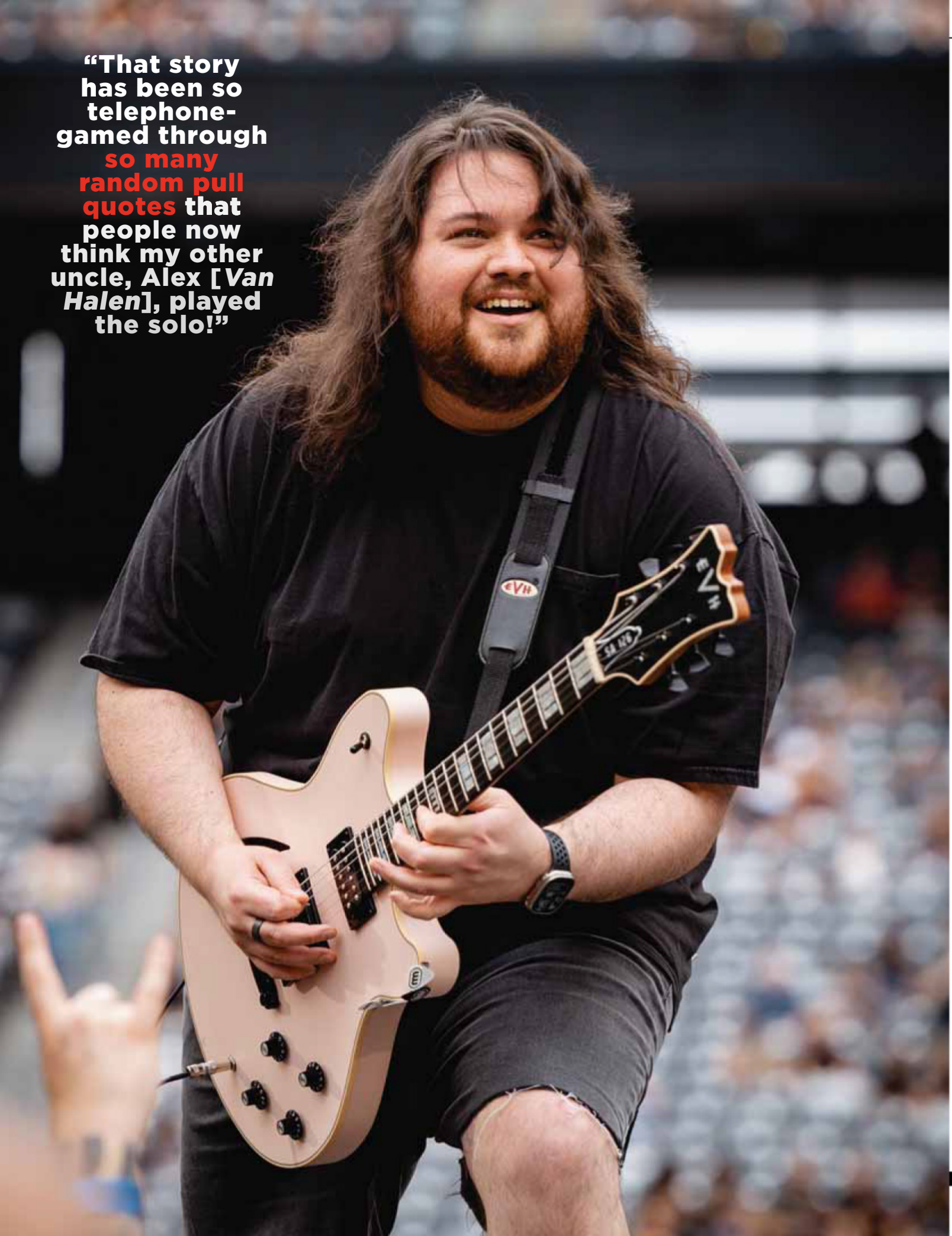


“That story has been so telephone-gamed through so many random pull quotes that people now think my other uncle, Alex [*Van Halen*], played the solo!”

For Wolfgang van Halen, 2023 was a

huge year. He spent an enormous chunk of it on the road with his band, Mammoth WVH — opening for Metallica's M72 stadium tour shows in the United States, Europe and Canada as well as the Alter Bridge Pawns & Kings tour and finishing the year with his band's first tour as the sole headlining act. Thanks to his guidance and vision, the EVH brand has continued to grow, with new releases like the Frankenstein series and MIJ Wolfgang Signature model, and he brought the revolutionary semi-acoustic electric SA-126 model to its final stages of completion. Somehow, he even found time to make the biggest commitment of his life by marrying his longtime girlfriend, Andraia Allsop, in October.

Another landmark event in a year filled with many of them was the release of Mammoth WVH's sophomore effort, *Mammoth II*. Whereas the first Mammoth WVH album was recorded over a three-year period, *Mammoth II* was completed in less than half a year, with tracking starting in September 2022 and mixing completed in February 2023.

"Because of my touring commitments," Wolfgang Van Halen says, "we only had a limited amount of time. I would prefer not to do that again. Arguably, we came out with a better record in a fraction of the time, so maybe that *is* the way to do it. I wanted to avoid the sophomore slump, so this album needed to be as good or better than the first one. I'm very OCD and a perfectionist, so I wouldn't have released it if I wasn't proud of it anyway."

In truth, *Mammoth II* showcases a massive progression from Mammoth WVH's debut album. The melodies are strong, dramatic and catchy; the production is expertly crafted with lush, sophisticated layers, epic cinematic soundscapes and hard-hitting punch; and the performances are skillfully and passionately executed, with Van Halen's powerful drumming, numerous dazzling solos and notably improved and matured lead and harmony vocals standing out. Like before, Wolfgang performed everything himself, recording all of the instrumental and vocal parts.

Also like before, he relied on the phenomenal talents of producer Michael "Elvis" Baskette, who played a critical role as Wolfgang's creative partner. A musical renaissance man with more than 25 years' experience as a producer, engineer and mixer who, like Wolfgang, is also an extremely talented multi-instrumentalist, Baskette helped Van Halen craft a compelling sonic universe filled with a multitude of guitar textures and ear candy that surprises listeners with new discoveries after repeated playbacks.

Although Mammoth WVH is a solo act in the studio, on stage Wolfgang is accompanied by a highly capable "band of brothers": guitarists Jon Jourdan and Frank Sidoris, bassist Ronnie Ficarro and drummer Garrett Whitlock. On the headlining tour, which began in November, the band is performing a 90-minute set featuring 14 to 17 songs, depending on that night's setlist. "I hope people dig the new album because we're going to play most of, if not all of it, across the different sets that we have planned," Van Halen says. "It's so much fun to play the new songs with the band."

In the following interview, Wolfgang Van Halen shares the details of the creation of *Mammoth II*.

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

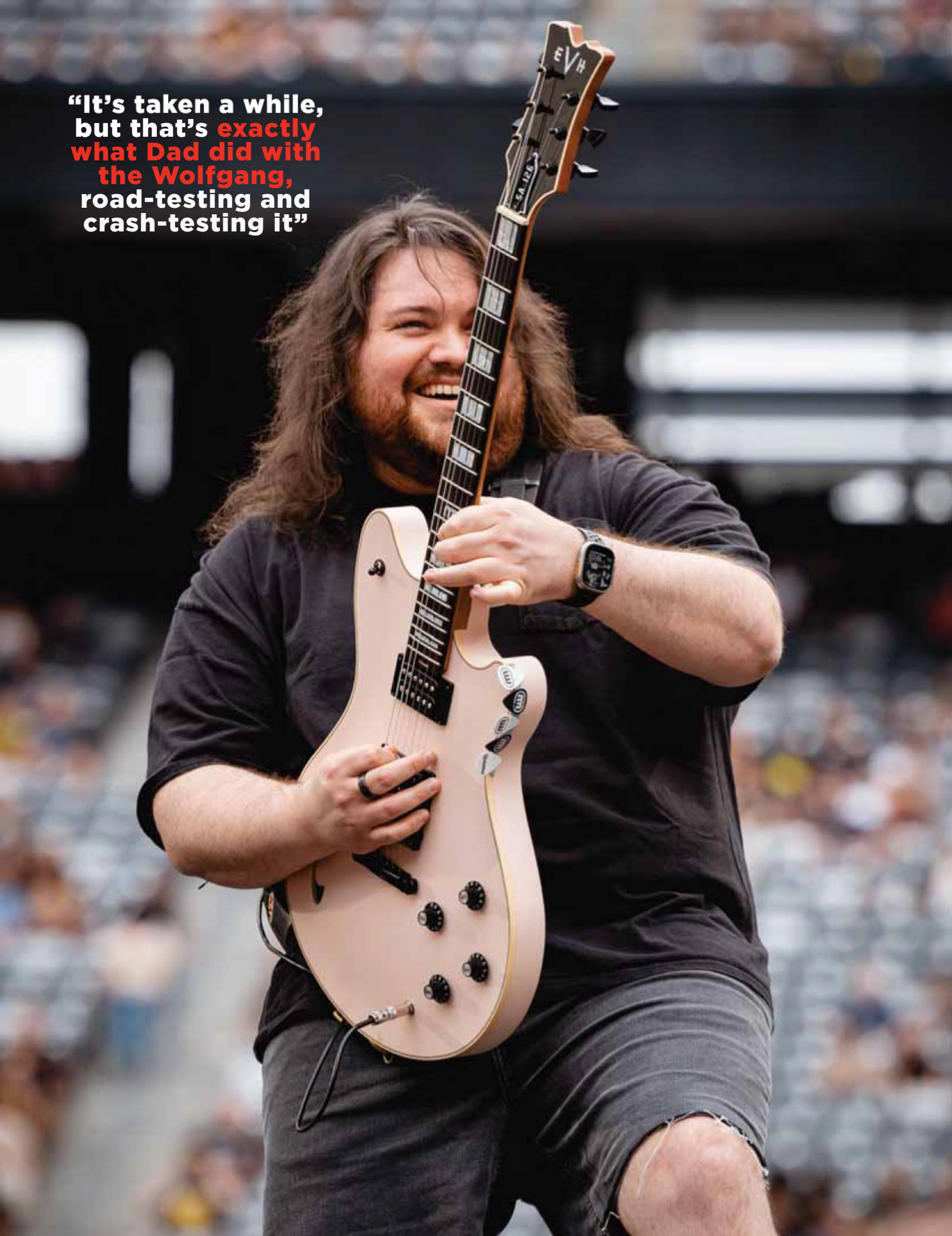
Wolfgang Van Halen on stage in 2023 with the EVH SA-126. "This album is an incredible showcase for what the SA-126 is capable of," he says

How does your songwriting process for *Mammoth II* start?

Usually it starts on guitar. A lot of my ideas stem from just me and an acoustic guitar — a Takamine that you can hear at the end of "Waiting." I like to make quick minute-long demos of whatever ideas I have but without any structure. There are some idea showcases where I put every variant of the idea I have back-to-back, like eight bars of each. Then I'll get with Elvis [*Baskette, producer*] and he'll be like, "This one is good. Keep working on that. Let's explore this." From there I finish everything up and we get to work. I record my demos using Logic and keep them as bare and bold as possible, especially the drums. When I go into the studio I'll flair it up and add personality to the drums and allow it to be a sort of spontaneous, in-the-studio writing process.

You upgraded 5150 before you recorded the album and replaced the old SSL mixing board with a Neve. Why did you choose the Neve?

I think the results speak for themselves. Sonically there is a big difference between this album and the last one, and part of that is because this one was done completely in 5150 from start to finish. The first album was recorded over a three-year period in three different studios. This album sounds more cohesive because all of the tracks were recorded in the same place, and you can hear that. With Elvis driving the board it was really magical. We were recording to tape, and I also got a Ludwig 45th Anniversary Vistalite Pro Beat green sparkle drum kit that sounds amazing. It's the one I'm playing in the "Don't Back Down" video. It was kind of unfair how much we had on



“It’s taken a while, but that’s exactly what Dad did with the Wolfgang, road-testing and crash-testing it”

our side in terms of sonic awesomeness. I'm very proud of it.

The Neve is a great-sounding board for recording drums and guitars. Did that influence your decision?
It did, but really anything compared to the last board that we had in there, which was barely working, would have been an upgrade. The Neve was such a wonderful board that was within my budget, and it was a no-brainer to get it, considering it's half the size of the SSL yet has twice as many channels. It's also not a power suck like the other board, which would get so hot that we'd have to keep the air conditioning on all the time so it wouldn't fucking melt, and that would get noisy. The power supply is much more efficient so we're saving a lot of money with the Neve in the studio because it doesn't run as hot or hard. It's whisper quiet. What an upgrade!

You've developed a great working partnership with Elvis. What does he contribute to your projects?
People don't realize the importance of Elvis in this process. I truly think that if I never said that I'm playing everything on the albums, people never would have known. But because I did, a lot of negative haters used that as a basis to criticize me after the first album came out, which was a big surprise. They would say things like, "He's got no natural back and forth in the studio, that means it's really uninspired material, blah, blah." If people didn't know that I was playing everything, they wouldn't say that.

At the same time, they fail to realize that Elvis and I literally are doing that back and forth in the studio. He is the other half of that creative bounce. When I'm stuck on something or if I'm on the right track, he helps me either keep digging or go somewhere else. He really is that friction that is needed to complete the creative process. He is absolutely integral to the process, and so is his engineer Jef Moll. You put me, Elvis, Jef and their assistant Josh Saldate in the studio and you get a Mammoth album. I need all of them. Then we have Matt Bruck there as well and my uncle Patrick [*Bertinelli*] to document everything, and it's a pretty easy process.

ANDRAIA ALLSOP

Does Elvis help with the song arrangements?
Definitely. He'd be like, "This part needs to go here. This part needs to go there. You need to make this and that happen." He really pushes me, but there's no animosity. If he tells me something isn't good enough, I know that it's always for the betterment of the song. I've worked enough with other songwriters to know that some people like to go, "Hey, let's do this and do that," because they want to say that that's the part that they wrote. They don't want to collaborate to make the best of it. With Elvis and me, it's really for the betterment of the song.

Can you give me an example of where he's improved one of the songs on the new record?
He helped push the melody out of me for "Better Than You." I wasn't sure where I was going, and our collaboration brought out that sort of dichotomy that I really love in the song, which is the sing-songy Beatles-style melodic quality juxtaposed with the Meshuggah-influenced sludgy heaviness of the main riff.

How does your recording process start in the studio? Since you're one guy performing all of the instrumental and vocal parts, do you have everything mapped out in advance?
I have my RFJ Logic demos, which means "Ready For Jef," that I send to Jef and he preps them for Pro Tools. Then we sync the tape machines and Pro Tools, and then we start tracking drums. Instead of recording separate sections, like doing the intro, then the verse and then the chorus and piecing everything together, we'll record as much of the entire song as I can do until I fuck up, which is usually about half of the song. They're a lot of big, long takes, so it's like full performances. The drum tracks are usually done in three big chunks for the whole song. We put together performances rather than stitching together smaller individual parts.

From there, we move on to bass. That went very quickly. My uncle Pat usually hangs out the whole time at the studio, but when I started recording bass tracks he had to go home for two days. When he came back, I was already done with the bass.

Then we get into guitar, which is really fun. The bulk of the work is devoted to recording rhythm guitar tracks. From there, we split duty between recording vocals, guitar solos and overdubs. I was writing everything as we were doing it, so usually I'd wake up, record or write melodies for the vocals and lyrics and pull my hair out over that. When I'm writing lyrics I have to go to a different mental place and get out of being the usual me. And that's not always a really fun place to go to, but we got it done. Then we hop back and forth between recording vocals and solos. If I sing really hard one day I'll record solos the next day to let my voice recover.

Recording solos was tough. I had a lot of ideas this time around that I felt like were good spots for solos, and there are more solos on this album compared to the first one. I put more stress on myself, trying to figure out where to go. Luckily throughout the process it just came to me and we figured it out. The only solo that I was really worried about was the one on "Another Celebration at the End of the World." I didn't come up with anything until we got in the studio and we were like, let's just try something. I knew I wanted a repeated, rhythmic tapping thing that goes through the stabs, but I didn't know what notes to do or how I was going to do it. Basically every solo was just a little bit of fucking around until we found the right path to go to.

That's how the solo for "I'm Alright" came around. I wanted to do an Eighties wah solo, but I got so tired of operating the wah that I had Uncle Pat do it. That story has been so telephone gamed through so many random pull quotes that people now think that my other uncle, Alex [*Van Halen*], played the fucking solo. The amount of clickbait that people got out of a completely wrong version of that story during that week was just so fucking dumb. As a joke, I included Pat in the credits on the back of the album. I thought it'd be really funny: "Wah operation on 'I'm Alright' solo by Patrick 'Uncle Pat' Bertinelli." When I added that, it actually held back the album cover design by a day because they had to wait until Pat signed a work-for-hire contract. We paid Pat $1 so we could legally have that there, which was amazing. They just updated Apple Music to show credits, and you can see it says, "Guitar Technician Patrick Bertinelli."

Was the Ludwig your primary kit?
That was the only kit, but we used a different snare for every song. We were in the storage locker picking up stuff for recording, and I asked Al if it would be cool if I borrowed a couple of his snares. He was like, "Sure!" so I ended

Wolfgang's *Mammoth II*-ning

Standard: "Right?" "Another Celebration at the End of the World," "Miles Above Me," "I'm Alright"
Standard/capo at 2nd fret: "Waiting"
Drop D (D A D G B E): "Like a Pastime," "Optimist," "Erase Me," "Better Than You"
Drop C♯ (C♯ G♯ C♯ F♯ A♯ D♯): "Take a Bow"

up using a different snare for every song. I can't remember the exact ones that we used. "I'm Alright" has a big washy, Eighties-esque, almost Def Leppard kind of snare, and I went with tighter sounding snares on songs like "Right?" and "Optimist." It was really fun to go through the selection process.

It sounds like you took a similar approach with the guitar solos. Each solo has its own sonic personality.

The biggest part of that was the sunburst SA-126, which was the third prototype of that model. That is basically all the guitar on the album. It was such a monumentally important guitar to the whole process. You can really hear the tones and how different it is and how dynamic it is, from the heavy, chuggy stuff to the clean tones at the beginning of "Take a Bow." It's such a versatile guitar. This album is an incredible showcase for what the SA-126 is capable of.

How was your bass rig set up? Did you mic an amp, record direct or do both?

We have this Ampeg B-100R combo that I like to use. We mic the back of it as well as the front. For some reason, Dad figured out that when we mic the back of it, it gets this rumbly, low quality that miking the front doesn't produce. Elvis was so surprised when we did that on the last album. He was like, "Wow! Holy shit! It really works!" It really adds to the overall bass tone.

For the first album, I didn't want to use the same basses that I played with Van Halen, so I played a Music Man StingRay on every song. This time around I used the Music Man for half of the songs. I also used my blue striped Frankenstein bass, which I like to call the Wolfenstein. That was the first bass I recorded with on the album, which I played on "Another Celebration." That was it, other than a song that didn't make the cut yet where I used a five-string tuned to drop A just to get that low note. I'm excited about working more on that song, so it'll probably show up on the next album.

What was your main amp for the guitar tracks?

It was the EVH 5150 III 50-watt 6L6 that I used for the Taylor Hawkins Tribute show at Wembley Stadium. I ended up using it for both of the tribute shows — we did the second show at the L.A. Forum in the middle of recording. I named the 50-watt head Noel and the cabinet is Liam.

Because they always fight?

Because I played them at Wembley and because Oasis played there. It's a British connection. And the cabinet makes the noise. [*Laughs*] That amp/cabinet and the SA-126 were the winning combo on this album. That's also what I have with me on tour all the time, which is why we sound so good.

What's special about that amp? Did (EVH amp designer) James Brown do a little extra magic on it?

It's straight up bone stock with no mods. Anybody can buy the stock amp at a store and get that same thing that we had. It's attainable. I call it "special" because I used it at those tribute shows, and in the studio there's a certain something special about the way it sounds and records. It just seems right, and it matches everything well.

How about effects — pedals, rack processors, outboard, plugins?

When it comes to effects, it was pretty much whatever Elvis suggested. He'd go, "Hey, let's try this." There were so many moments like that throughout recording. Elvis would plug in random guitar pedals and work them in, and there were so many layers of stuff that it got to the point where I don't even know half the shit that we were using. I know we used a Uni-Vibe pedal. I had all of my usual EVH pedals, like the phaser, flanger and wah.

When it comes to my music, there are rarely any parts that need a specific effect. My pedalboard on stage is there for whenever I feel like adding something, not something that I *need* to do, although occasionally I may need a delay for something like the "Distance" solo. But every solo is just bumping up to the red channel and doing whatever hits me at the time.

We definitely had a lot more fun this time around with effects. I let Elvis go nuts and we'd keep going until we found something that sounds cool. You can really hear that throughout the whole album because there are so many layers. I think you hear something new every time you listen to it. On the choruses for "Take a Bow" there are three different guitar tracks playing the low riff and each one has a different effect, like a flanger on one and a phaser on the other.

You used your dad's classic Frankenstein guitar and his number-one Marshall to record the "Take a Bow" solo. What inspired that?

When I started making the album I thought it would be fun to use a different guitar of his for every solo. But then it turned into, "Let's just boil it down to one moment that feels really special." When I first wrote the solo section for "Take a Bow," it started as a looped section of the main riff. As I was recording the solo I sat there for three or four hours and came up with all these fun parts. The solo section got longer and longer, which made the whole song longer. It felt like such a special moment that I didn't want to change it. So that's where that whole buildup comes from. And it felt like such a departure, or really an *elevation* from anything I've done before.

It felt like a really special moment to celebrate by using the Frankenstein and the original Marshall through one of Dad's OG Marshall cabs from the club days at the same time. It was really cool to be able to

have that special moment in my career, songwriting and guitar playing marked by something so important. It was like having my dad right there with me.

Did you use a Variac?
Yes, we did. That's the authentic secret to that whole combo.

"Miles Above Me" has a lot of thick midrange guitar tones, especially on the solo.
One of my favorite stories about the tracking of that song is the intro of it. You can hear when Elvis unmutes the second guitar track that comes in because the feedback hits right away and the guitar screams. The guitar was feeding back uncontrollably the entire time before I started playing, but you only really hear it at the very beginning after he unmutes the track. That was one of my favorite moments because the guitar was just screaming and you could hear it in between every take.

The guitar and bass tones on "Optimist" are really heavy, especially on the middle section about two and half minutes into the song.
Again, that was the SA-126. That guitar is just fucking stupid-versatile.

When is the SA-126 coming out?
We will be able to talk more about that next year when everyone will be able to get their hands on it, finally. It's taken a while, but that's exactly what Dad did with the Wolfgang, road-testing and crash-testing it. It just gets better with each revision we've made as we've gone along. I'm really excited for people to finally get it in their hands. It's such a rare thing and such a wonderful opportunity to be able to design a brand-new instrument that's ideal for what I'm doing. But it's capable of so much more. I can't wait to hear what other people use it for. I've had such a wonderful time with Matt (Bruck) and Chip (Ellis) designing it. It's just a dream.

How did you create that dissonant guitar sound heard at the end of "Erase Me"?
There's this one harmonic that's right around the third or fourth fret. That's just that harmonic played on every string at once with the phaser pinned up all the way going nuts. You can hear the effect start to wane because I turned the phaser down a little bit as it lets go.

While you were recording you posted a photo of your dad's white 1962 (Les Paul) SG TV — the guitar with horn that he sawed off when recording "Dirty Movies." Where do you use that guitar?
I call it the "Les G." I used it on "Like a Pastime" for the melody on top when the song comes in, and also for the harmony to the rhythm part. The low part is the SA-126. I also used it for that melodic, almost retro Eighties line.

What effects did you use on the intro?
We used the EVH flanger and phaser and a straight-from-the-amp sound and blended the three together. It ended up not being as washy and effected as I thought it was going to be.

Did you use any other guitars on the record?
I used one of Matt's Teles for a demo, but that idea never got fleshed out fully. But other than that, no. It's kind of crazy how much that one sunburst SA-126 is the backbone of the entire album. From the clean intro to the djent parts of "Take a Bow" that's all the same guitar. The SA-126 is way beyond a typical semi-hollow. There's really nothing else like that guitar. It takes its inspiration from a classic design, but the way we put it together, the pickups, and pretty much everything else, make it a different sounding guitar. It's like a hot rod, but with a souped-up modern engine. Nothing like this existed until we made it.

What gauges do you prefer for your strings and picks?
My picks are Dunlop Max-Grip .60mm nylon. I used them on the 2012 and 2015 Van Halen tours, but a while back I went through every single type and gauge of pick that Dunlop makes. I was like, "What if there's a different pick out there that's perfect for me?" It turns out there wasn't, and I had been using the one I needed from the start. It was fun to get that confirmation. They're very versatile. They're capable for all of the fast passages in my soloing, but they're equally great overall for strumming and power chords.

I was using the same sets of 9-46 EVH guitar strings made by D'Addario for years, although in the studio we'll change gauges depending on the tuning. But when I went over to play at Wembley, during the rehearsals I was so nervous that I was bending everything out of tune. I was in a room with Justin (Hawkins), Josh (Freese) and Dave (Grohl), and in between every little break I'd have to retune. It was horrible. I felt like I was wasting everyone's time. We gauged up to a heavier set of 10-48 strings and it worked. Before then all my guitars had .009s because that's what Dad used. But the .010s have been very helpful in terms of maintaining tuning. I don't need lower tension since I'm not using a Floyd or anything like that. You have to work a little harder, but it keeps everything in check.

You've been touring with your band for more than two years. Do you plan on including them in the recording process, or are you going to continue working by yourself?
It's very possible, but currently I'm not sure if I'm ready to completely let go of the recording process. I have such a good time recording. It's the only opportunity I get to play drums anymore. The core DNA, at least so far, of the Mammoth albums is that whole creative process between Elvis and me. But ask me three albums from now, and maybe I'll be sick of it. I really don't know. But for now I enjoy the process too much, selfishly, to give it up.

I may just ease into it. I would absolutely love to collaborate with the guys in the band. Maybe the most realistic prospect is having an individual member appear on one song here or there, like maybe Frank does a solo on this or Jon is on that. Maybe their involvement will start to seep through over time instead of just making a full album right away. But that's yet to be seen. We'll just have to see what happens. GW

RYAN PIORKOWSKI (LEFT) ANDRAIA ALLSOP (RIGHT)

The Gang's All Here

A quick guide to Wolfgang Van Halen's touring rig

- **Guitars:** Various prototype EVH SA-126 semi-hollow electrics
- **Amp:** EVH 5150 III 50-watt 6L6 head with EVH 5150 III 4x12 cabinet (Celestion G12 EVH 20-watt speakers); Blue channel setting—Gain: 5, Low: 9, Mid: 3.5, High: 8, Volume: 3, Presence: 7.5; Red channel setting—Gain: 5.5, Low: 8.5, Mid: 3.5, High: 9, Volume: 3
- **Effects:** Cry Baby EVH 95 Wah, MXR EVH 30 Chorus, MXR EVH 117 Flanger, MXR EVH 90 Phase 90, Boss DD-3 Digital Delay, EarthQuaker Devices Afterneath. Custom power supply by Dave Friedman

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SOUND CHECK

the gear in review

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PRS GUITARS
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Frankenstein Relic Series

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Rack in the Box

UAFX EVERMORE, HEAVENLY, ORION AND 1176 GUITAR PEDALS **By Chris Gill**

SOMETIME AROUND THE late Seventies or early Eighties, guitarists realized that the best way to get studio sound on stage was by using studio gear. Sometimes this simply wasn't possible (for example, no one in their right mind would take an EMT plate reverb on tour) but even when it was, the equipment was usually cumbersome and prohibitively expensive to all but the most well-paid stars and session players.

The digital revolution has changed that, and now studio-grade processing is available on everything from smartphones and tablets to stompbox pedals. As great as many of these products are, few companies have the expertise and lengthy experience with studio processors of Universal Audio. Their UAFX guitar pedals are the perfect solution for guitarists who want the sonic benefits of top-grade studio processing as well as incredibly detailed reproductions of elusive classic gear. The UAFX Evermore Studio Reverb, Heavenly Plate Reverb and 1176 Studio Compressor provide drop dead accurate reproductions of some of the most used studio effects, while the new Orion Tape Echo offers the genuine sounds of a classic tape delay unit without the bulk and maintenance hassles.

Each of these four new UAFX pedals share the same compact footprint and top and rear panel control

[*clockwise from top left*] **Rear views of the Universal Audio 1176, Evermore, Heavenly and Orion pedals**

and jack configurations, although the actual control functions for each pedal are different. All four units have a side-mounted USB-C port for loading software updates and rear-mounted mono ¼-inch input and output jacks. The delay and reverb pedals have Trails/True Bypass switches while the 1176 compressor has a Buffer/True Bypass switch, and the other rear-mount switch is for Predelay on/off (Evermore), Mod Rate slow/fast (Heavenly), Preamp on/off (Orion) or Parallel on/off (1176). Top panel controls are as follows: Mod, Mix and Bass, Mid, Treble Decay EQ, Room/Small Hall/Large Hall switch (Evermore); Delay, Mix, Predelay, EQ, Mod, A/B/C plate setting switch (Heavenly); Delay, Mix, Feedback, Wonk, Rec Level, Mint/Worn/Old tape condition switch (Orion); Input, Output, Attack, Release, Ratio, Single/Dual/Sustain switch.

The Evermore pedal is based upon the legendary Lexicon 224 12-bit reverb unit that generated the hypnotic ambient textures heard on dozens of classic albums during the Eighties and beyond. Its grainy long reverb tails sound absolutely luscious and pair particularly well with guitar thanks to the reverb's thick body and depth. The EQ controls for the decay can be dialed in to accentuate those tails without making the primary dry signal sound too washed out or indistinct.

The Heavenly pedal offers the brilliant sheen and harmonically rich reverb of an EMT 140 in a compact pedal that weighs less than 1/600th of an original unit. The A/B/C switch provides Vintage Bright, Vintage Dark and Modern Full plate reverb settings that duplicate the tones and textures heard on countless albums since 1957.

Based on the vintage Maestro EP-3 Echoplex, the Orion pedal joins an increasingly crowded group of Echoplex emulation effects, but because it includes a preamp section it's more cost-effective than competing pedals that require a separate preamp. Maximum delay time is about one second, and the added warmth from boosting the Record Level control and engaging the preamp along with the unpredictable modulated wow and flutter warble of the Wonk control results in stunningly authentic Echoplex effects.

Studio-quality compression truly comes to the pedalboard thanks to the 1176, which replicates Universal Audio's own legendary 1176 Limiting Amplifier in compact form. The 1176 delivers seemingly transparent compression that always sounds natural and organic even at the most extreme "squashed" ratio, attack and decay settings. The consistency that it brings to any guitar tone from clean to distorted is magical, and it's no wonder that so many pro engineers consistently rely on the 1176 to bring guitar performances to life.

Although each of these pedals sound good when placed in front of an amp's input, the Evermore and Heavenly truly sound their best when patched into an effects loop. The Orion sounds great in a loop as well, but to get the most of the preamp section and emulate the best-known Echoplex guitar tones you'll want to patch it into the amp's input. The 1176 sounds good pretty much anywhere you place it, so users may want to experiment with placing it before and in between various effects, as well as toward the end of the signal chain in an effects loop for broader sweetening.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICES
$219 (Evermore, Heavenly, Orion); $199 (1176)
MANUFACTURER
Universal Audio, uaudio.com

- **PROS:** Affordable; accurate reproductions of classic studio and tape echo effects developed with UA's expertise; compact pedalboard-friendly format.
- **CONS:** Mono only.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
UA applied decades of studio processing and digital emulation know-how into an affordable series of gig-worthy stomp boxes that bring professional polish and timeless tones to any guitarist's stage rig.

No Frills

PRS GUITARS NF 53 By Paul Riario

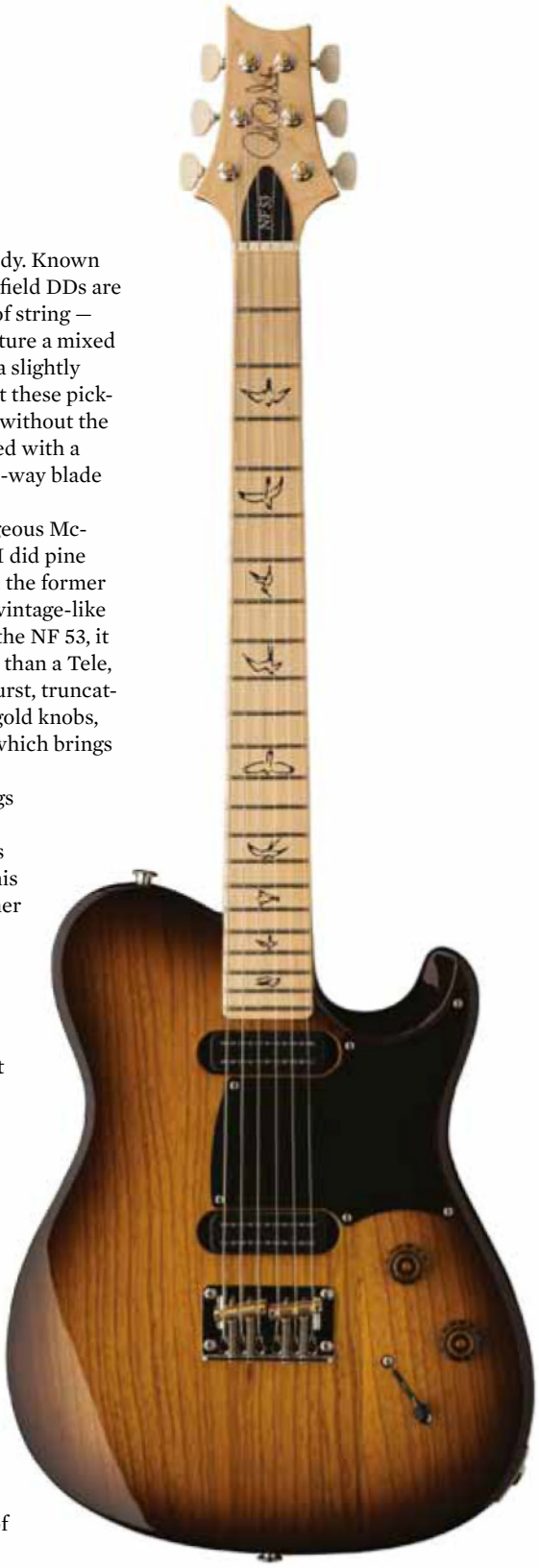
BACK WHEN JOHN Mayer approached Paul Reed Smith about essentially building a "Strat" that ultimately became the PRS Silver Sky, much of the online commentary erupted into heated debates over its Strat similarities — or justifying how much Mayer and Smith successfully reimagined what a Stratocaster should be. Now, with the simultaneous launch of the PRS NF 53 (the guitar reviewed here) and Myles Kennedy Signature models (covered on page 33), which are coincidentally similar, many peanut gallery naysayers have already dubbed these new guitars the "PRS Telecaster." And while I can't wholeheartedly disagree with that cynical assumption — mostly because PRS confirms the NF 53 is "inspired by one of Paul Reed Smith's vintage guitars from 1953" — I have no problem declaring the NF 53 as an imaginative spin-off without being blatantly derivative and still, at its core, a compelling and pure PRS model in every respect.

Part of PRS's specialty Bolt-On Series, the NF 53 comes with a swamp ash body and a flat top carve, although you can detect an ever so slight forearm bevel on the front along with a generous belly cut on the back, which departs from the hard edges of a Tele. Another contour cut is the deep cutaway scoop found on its lower horn that's distinctly PRS but that also provides unfettered access to the upper frets. PRS employs a "pattern 53" neck carve where one can extrapolate its vintage profile, which feels a lot like a full and rounded C that comfortably fills your palm, but isn't too thick to impede your playing. The glossed maple neck is flat-sawn with a 25.5-inch scale length and scarf-joint headstock, while its maple fretboard sports 22 frets, a flat 10-inch radius and the elegant silhouette version of PRS's signature bird inlays.

Because I own a PRS Vela, the NF 53's plate-style steel bridge with brass saddles feels instantly familiar. But now, combined with PRS's vintage-style button design closed-back tuners with unplated brass shafts, it appears the direct contact between brass shafts to brass saddles seemingly encourages a much livelier tone and snappier response, not to mention ample sustain. But truly, the guitar's newer voice comes courtesy of a special set of PRS Narrowfield DD pickups that are screwed directly into the body. Known as "Deep Dish" pickups, the Narrowfield DDs are designed to sense a shorter section of string — hence the "narrow" name — and feature a mixed magnet/steel pole piece design and a slightly deeper bobbin. But what's key is that these pickups serve up fuller single-coil tones without the hum. Finally, these pickups are paired with a volume and tone control and a three-way blade pickup switch.

This review model came in a gorgeous McCarty Tobacco Sunburst, and while I did pine for the Black Doghair finish, I found the former to be more attractive in achieving a vintage-like appearance. And the more I look at the NF 53, it seems far more akin to an LP Junior than a Tele, but it could also be its tobacco sunburst, truncated single-ply black pickguard, dual gold knobs, and absence of a Tele control plate which brings it closer to that comparison.

Looks aside, the NF 53 loudly rings like a bell acoustically and is powerfully responsive. As usual with PRS's workmanship, the fit and finish of this guitar is nearly flawless, and like other PRS models, it's built for precision playability. But can we call it a "PRS Telecaster?" In some ways, it does the "Tele thing," albeit with a lot of body in its twang, along with chiming highs and a tight bass response, much in part to the Narrowfield DD pickups. Of course, it's achieved without hum, and no matter where you configure the pickups from the switch, the DD tones are even and balanced, unlike a typical Tele. But the pickups are also incredibly detailed with a smidge of output, which means you can get some of that P90 bite but not so much the snarl. Despite this, there is no doubt in my mind that the NF 53 is a very different and electrifying addition to PRS's Bolt-On range, and if anything, its simplicity and vintage styling make it a great deal of fun to play.



CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $2,899
MANUFACTURER: PRS Guitars, prsguitars.com

PROS: The Narrowfield DD pickups serve up detailed and fuller-sounding single-coil tones without the 60-cycle hum; construction and playability are top-notch.

CONS: The guitar's vintage leanings and pickup choice may not be for modern or metal players.

THE BOTTOM LINE
A PRS model with twang and heft, the NF 53 certainly adopts its borrowed inspiration from the rough and tumble simplicity of a Telecaster. Still, it arrives as a far more capable instrument with "good bones" that's further enhanced by its carves and components, and standout Narrowfield DD pickups.

Party Monster

EVH FRANKENSTEIN RELIC SERIES

By Chris Gill

THE EVH STRIPED Series is pretty much the coolest thing going for guitarists who want to make a loud and proud statement about their appreciation for Eddie Van Halen and his influence. However, many players may prefer something a little less flashy and distracting-looking that still provides plenty of classic VH vibe. If that's your jam, the new EVH Frankenstein Relic Series delivers the goods.

The EVH Frankenstein Relic guitar is based upon the mid-Eighties iteration of Ed's iconic Frankenstein, but it features a single-color finish (red, white or black) and offers a few modern modifications, like a compound-radius fretboard and EVH Floyd Rose with D-Tuna, perfect for guitarists who want the aggressive tones and rat rod appeal of Ed's original ax, expertly combined with high-performance playability.

The EVH Frankenstein Relic features a familiar Strat-style asymmetrical double cutaway body that's made from basswood to optimize resonance and keep the overall weight around an average of seven comfortable pounds. The bolt-on neck is quartersawn maple with a separate maple cap fingerboard (so there's no skunk stripe), both finished with Heavy Relic lacquer that seals and protects the wood. The neck finish and simulated dirt/wear on our test example had a warm, mocha latte brown color that resembled roasted maple. The body finish is gloss lacquer that is subjected to moderate relic aging around the edges and common wear areas like the forearm contour and rear "belt buckle" section.

Appropriate for its rat rod design, the guitar has a high-power engine: an EVH Wolfgang humbucker in the bridge position, with the pickup measuring 14.3k ohms resistance. The neck position single-coil pickup and selector switch in the middle pickup cavity are only there for show, just like they are on Ed's Frankenstein (however, that pickup and selector switch are functional — they're just not wired in, but can be). The humbucker is direct wired to a volume pot (with a skirted "Tone" knob) and mounted directly to the body (no mounting ring or height adjustment screws), and that's it. The Wolfgang humbucker's tone is surprisingly brilliant and almost Strat-like, with a distinct upper midrange bite and snappy attack that remain consistently lively even as the volume knob is backed down for clean tones. The bass has plenty of balls for heavy distorted rhythms and riffs. The single bridge humbucker/volume knob-only setup is not the most versatile configuration on its own, but its rich harmonic content provides a solid base for sculpting a much wider variety of sounds with amp settings, a wah pedal and/or a programmable EQ.

With 22 jumbo frets, a 12-16-inch compound radius fretboard, slim modified "C" profile, 1.69-inch nut width and easily accessible heel-mounted truss rod adjustment wheel, the neck is built for speed and precise, comfortable playability. The raw wood-like feel of the Heavy Relic lacquer finish provides an ideal balance between smoothness and resistance to facilitate gliding up and down the neck and stopping precisely where the player desires.

The EVH-branded Floyd Rose 1000 Series Locking Tremolo with EVH D-Tuna are robustly built to provide solid tuning stability and survive years of spirited whammy abuse. The tremolo block is made from brass to deliver enhanced resonance and sustain. As per Ed's preferred setup, the tremolo bridge is blocked flush with the body in a non-floating, dive-bomb-only configuration.

The EVH Frankenstein Relic guitar provides an ideal personalization base for players who love Eddie's Frankenstein guitar but prefer their own visual flair. With its broken-in relic aesthetics, it's something you won't mind slapping stickers onto or spraying with your own custom paint designs. However, it's also a great and affordable option for players seeking a stripped-down hot rod shred guitar that can deliver years of inspiration and rock-solid reliable performance on stage.

CHEAT SHEET

STARTING PRICE: $1,699.99
MANUFACTURER:
EVH, evhgear.com

- **PROS:** EVH Wolfgang humbucker delivers powerful, crisp, articulate tones; neck has comfortable worn-in feel; provides classic Frankenstein features and attitude in an incognito package.
- **CONS:** Single bridge humbucker and volume control setup provides a limited range of tones (unless you wire in the "Easter Egg" neck pickup and selector); pickup height is not adjustable.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
By ditching Ed's signature stripes in favor of a single-color finish, the EVH Frankenstein Relic Series provides all of the vibe, tones and high-performance attributes of the Frankenstein guitar in a package that allows players to make their own visual and aural statements.

Buzz Bin
Danelectro '59 Triple Divine

AT THE MOMENT, there are 25 Danelectro models to choose from. And sure, most of us musical snobs all love Danelectro's '59 DC and Longhorn bass because of their vintage pedigree. Even the more esoteric Sitar and Baritone models are equally adored for their affordable utility. But let's just say that hasn't stopped Danelectro from building upon their storied past with newer models that are marked improvements over the originals. One of those models is the '59 Triple Divine, which advances from their dual-pickup '59 Divine by sporting a trio of Danelectro's 1950s vintage lipstick pickups — among other player upgrades. Many artists, from Jimmy Page to Tom Petty, have employed Danelectros as a stark alternative to mainstream brands to great effect, and now, with the fantastic '59 Triple Divine, I'm pretty sure you'll start seeing this utterly cool, vintage-inspired guitar on more stages and in many studios.

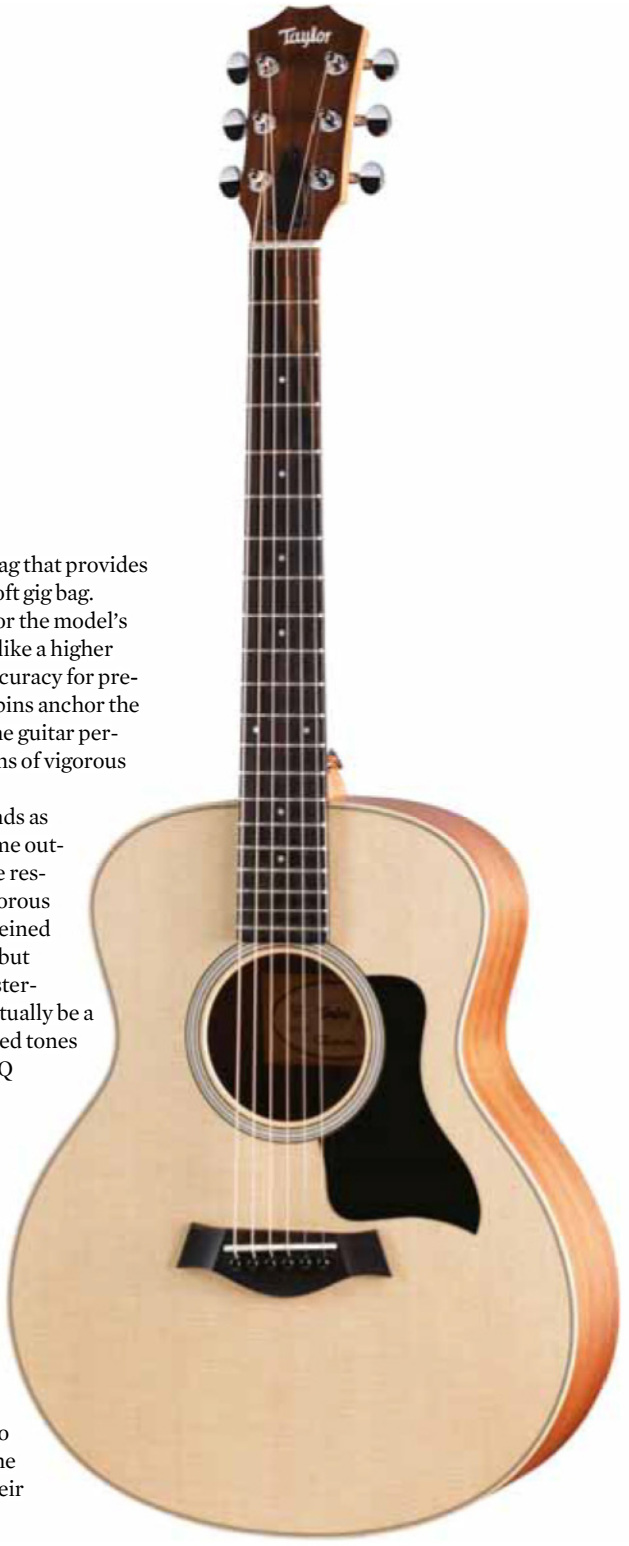
Once you get the '59 Triple Divine in your hands, what's abundantly clear is how rock solid it feels compared to previous Danelectro models. It has a firm, woody knock when strummed unplugged, and its out-of-the-box setup is dialed in properly for soloing or slide work. The review model came in an elegantly rich dark burgundy colorway (that looks a lot like Jeff Beck's Oxblood Les Paul) with top and back creme binding that distinctly elevates its vintage vibe (there's even a pickguard included if you wish to add even more vintage character). But if burgundy ain't your thing, the guitar is also available in red, blue metallic and black finishes. The highlight is a trio of Danelectro's 1950s vintage pickups with alnico VI magnets that are sand-blasted and housed in trés-chic lipstick tubes — the same kind of tubes Danelectro bought from Max Factor (the cosmetics giant) — made with a composite of 80/20 brass/zinc alloy. Moreover, the bridge pickup is overwound to be 20 percent hotter for added zing and the inclusion of a CRL 5-way pickup switch expands all tonal options, combined with the knurled volume and tone knobs. What's noticeable are hardware upgrades like Gotoh vintage button tuners (in creme) with a 15:1 gear ratio for pinpoint tuning stability, a bone nut and a fully adjustable diecast six-saddle bridge where the strings are top loaded, which all contribute to the Triple Divine's improved intonation. And true to Danelectro form, the short-horn double-cutaways and semi-hollow body design, bolt-on maple neck, and flat radius fingerboard with 21 smoothly-dressed frets remain intact.

The '59 Triple Divine is the kind of guitar that makes you blurt out, "Yep, that's it. This is great." I just can't find much fault, and frankly, there's so much to love about it. I could point out that the neck slightly overhangs where it bolts on at the neck pocket, but it's not a structural issue or a flaw, it's mostly the design and doesn't affect the guitar at all. But overall, Danelectro got everything right in its steadfast build, with broken-in playability and a slightly taut string tension — which I believe contributes to its quick response. I also find the forward-angled lipstick pickups offer a pointed attack when faced with an overdriven amp and can be pushed for singing overtones if you drive them toward sustained feedback. For me, the "notched" (2 & 4) pickup settings offered the most jangle, easily churning out chiming highs and woody mids that make their presence known with loud and clean settings. It's a serious player guitar, and there's truly a "divine" element to this Danelectro — poised as an old guitar with a new soul.
— Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: $799
MANUFACTURER: Danelectro, danelectro.com

Mighty Mini

TAYLOR GS MINI SAPELE By Chris Gill



WE FIRST REVIEWED the Taylor GS Mini shortly after Taylor announced the model in 2010. Over the last 14 years, Taylor has introduced a wide variety of GS Mini models and expanded the line, which now consists of 10 models that range in price from $499 to $1,199 and include two acoustic basses. The Taylor GS Mini Sapele occupies the lowest end of that price spectrum (with the GS Mini-e Koa Plus and GS Mini-e Rosewood Plus costing the most), and much to our surprise it is very similar to the original GS Mini model we reviewed but costs nearly $200 less! How Taylor defied the laws of inflation is a mystery, considering that the materials, craftsmanship, tone and playability remain as good as they've ever been.

The GS Mini Sapele still retains the curvaceous Grand Symphony body shape, deep body dimensions (almost 4 ½ inches at the deepest extension of its arched, bowl-shaped back) and specially voiced cross bracing construction found throughout the GS Mini line that help the model deliver big guitar tone from a compact, travel-size instrument. Other specs consistent throughout the entire GS Mini lineup include a 23 ½-inch scale, 20 frets and 1 11/16-inch nut width.

The GS Mini Sapele's top is solid Sitka spruce while the back and sides are layered sapele — an alternative to mahogany that is stronger and harder, resulting in slightly brighter overall tone than mahogany. The ebony fretboard and bridge also remain from the previous iteration, but the neck is now tropical mahogany (instead of sapele) and the saddle is Micarta instead of Nubone. The model ships with a structured gig bag that provides better protection than a standard soft gig bag.

Taylor doesn't specify the ratio for the model's die-cast chrome tuners, but it feels like a higher ratio that provides finer detailed accuracy for precise tuning. The tuners and bridge pins anchor the strings securely in place, keeping the guitar perfectly in tune even after long sessions of vigorous strumming.

Tonally, the GS Mini Sapele sounds as good as ever, with impressive volume output and projection, rich, reverb-like resonance, brisk treble and sweet, sonorous midrange. The bass is just slightly reined in, particularly on the low E string, but while the bass may not seem as boisterous when playing live, this could actually be a major bonus in the studio as recorded tones are nicely balanced and need less EQ sculpting.

As players have come to expect from Taylor, the construction is flawless throughout and the materials are especially attractive for a sub-$500 instrument, with the subtle stripes of the sapele back being particularly noteworthy. The light satin finish leaves open pores in the sapele back and sides that allow the wood to breathe. A pre-installed bracket and cable clip for mounting an optional ES-Go pickup allows owners to electrify the guitar when the need arises — or their budgets allow.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $499
MANUFACTURER: Taylor Guitars, taylorguitars.com

PROS: Price is almost $200 less than the introductory price 14 years ago; big guitar tone; shorter scale is ideal for beginners, or even children.

CONS: The bass response of the low E string is somewhat subdued.

THE BOTTOM LINE
The GS Mini Sapele remains the perfect choice for budget-conscious players who want the comfort and portability of a small-body acoustic without sacrificing big guitar tone.

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IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2024

SING THE SONG

Emulating vocals on guitar

ONE OF THE greatest things about the guitar is its capacity to emulate the melodic nuances and expressiveness of the human voice. Singers rarely simply hit pitches; there are often glissandos between notes, meaning ascending or descending movement from one note to the next. For example, instead of singing a D followed by E, a singer will often seamlessly glide from D to E; the reverse is also common, gliding from E down to D. After landing on the targeted pitch, vibrato is then typically added, to sweeten the note.

Guitarists can emulate these sounds with string bends, finger slides and vibrato. A similar effect is possible via the use of a slide, which allows the player to seamlessly glide between pitches while also affecting different types of vibrato. In this way, one can "sing" on the guitar.

A great way to work on this technique is to mimic the vocal phrasing and articulation of a specific artist and song. In this lesson, we'll focus on Elmore James' vocals on his blues classic, "It Hurts Me Too."

FIGURE 1 presents an emulation of Elmore's vocal in the song's first verse, played here in the key of E. Throughout this eight-bar example, the melodic elements occur during beats 1 and 4, with supplemental rhythm parts added during beats 2 and 3.

The first line of the song, "You say you're hurting..." is emulated in the pickup bar. When playing this instrumentally, I'm thinking about the words and vocal phrasing Elmore used. Also of prime importance is the articulation of every note. Notice throughout the example that almost every note is bent slightly, pushed up a quarter step or half step, or bent upwards and released, with vibrato added whenever a note is held. With each pitch "moving" in a subtle way, these small alterations in articulation are what lend the phrase a vocal quality. Pull-offs are also used, to support the legato (smooth) feeling on the lines.

As always, it's important to know the form of the chord progression as a reference point for a melody. **FIGURE 2** depicts the eight-bar form: two bars of the tonic, E, are followed by two bars of the IV (four) chord, A; bar 5 is a return to the one chord, E; bar 6 is the five chord, B7; and bars 7 and 8 are a turnaround of E7 - A7(♭9) - Am - E7 - B7.

FIG. 1

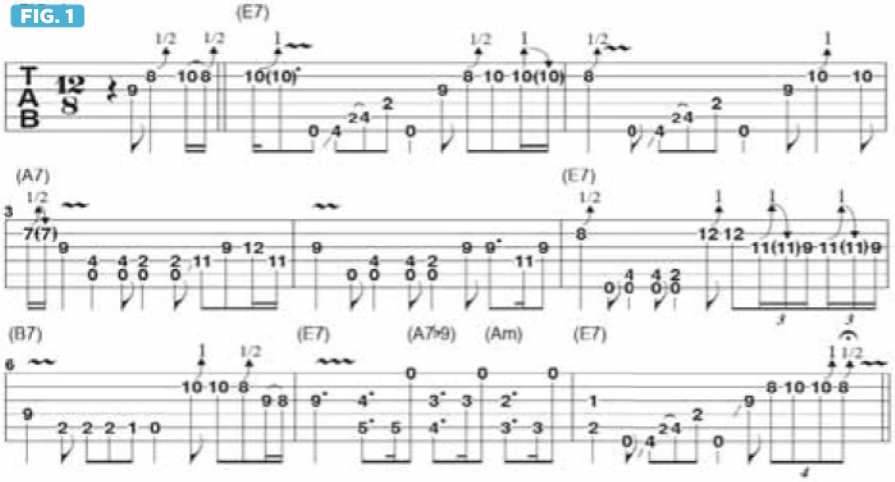


FIG. 2 E blues shuffle, eight-bar form

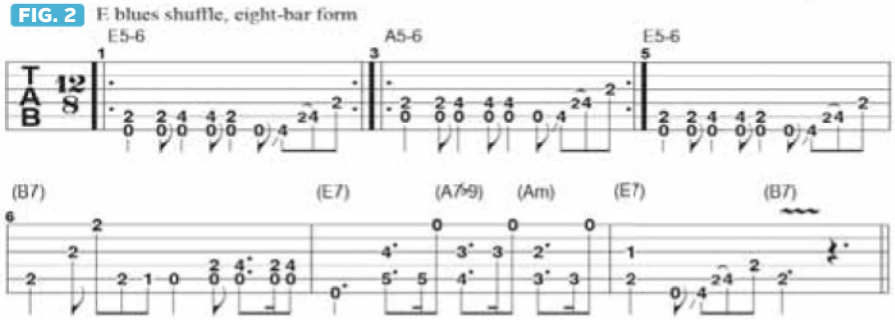


FIG. 3

Now let's play the same melody with a slide, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 3**. Just as in **FIGURE 1**, the melody notes fall on beats 1 and 4, articulated here with the slide, with the rhythm part added on beats 2 and 3, fretted without the slide. As you'll find, a very vocal-like vibrato can be attained with a slide. Notice that some of the melody notes here are played in different spots than in **FIGURE 1**. These choices were made to accommodate and make the most of the slide technique.

***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort's latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**

ALISON HASBACH

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2024

TOOLS OF THE TRADE, PART 10

The 1969 Fender Stratocaster

THIS MONTH'S "TOOL of the trade" is a 1969 white "maple cap" Fender Stratocaster, which I refer to as my "bronchitis Strat." I purchased this guitar in Des Moines, Iowa, in 2017. While the band was in Chicago, our crew were staying in Des Moines and my tech, Mike Hickey, had been at a music store the day before and took a picture of this guitar and sent it to me.

Since my earliest days of guitar collecting, I had been looking for a Jimi Hendrix "Woodstock" Strat, which in this case is a white one from 1969 with a "maple cap" fretboard. The neck is one piece of maple, and then affixed atop of it is a separate maple fretboard.

My manager wanted me to cancel the show we had scheduled in Des Moines that night because I was suffering from a bad bout of bronchitis; I could barely breathe or walk, let alone perform. But I decided to go through with the show, basically because I just wanted to go to Des Moines to buy this guitar before the gig.

Luckily, the doctors pumped me full of meds, and I played the show, purchased the guitar and never looked back! This is a rare instrument and a cool example of something Jimi would have played back in 1969/1970. When I bought it, it still had the original tags on it, as well as the "ash tray," as the bridge cover is affectionately known.

FIGURE 1 is an example played with the guitar set on its neck pickup: the sound is full and warm, especially if you strike the strings over the neck pickup or the fretboard itself, as Jimi would often do. All of the phrases here are along the lines of what Jimi would play on songs such as "Little Wing," "The Wind Cries Mary" or "Bold As Love:" I begin by sounding E major triads via hammering on from F♯, the 2nd, to G♯, the major 3rd, while barring across the D and G strings at the 9th fret. In bar 2, this technique modulates to A and then returns to E in bar 3, supplemented with double-stop (two-note) slides up and down the G and B strings. I switch to B major chord embellishments in bar 4, then move from E to A to B and resolve the line back to E.

In **FIGURE 2**, I switch to the middle pickup, which yields a throatier, more mid-rangy sound. These bluesy lines are based primarily on the E blues scale (E, G, A, B♭, B, D) and played SRV-style, with an abundance of quick pull-offs and finger slides.

I engage the guitar's bridge pickup in **FIGURE 3** and play classic blues-type lines in the key of G, once again relying on quick slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs. Though the sound is strident, the maple cap adds more heft and fullness to the tone.

While on the neck pickup, this guitar will yield those beautiful, hollow rhythm sounds we all associate with Hendrix classics like "The Wind Cries Mary." 1969 "maple cap" white Strats are hard to find, so if you come across one, it's well worth the investment!

FIG. 1 neck pickup

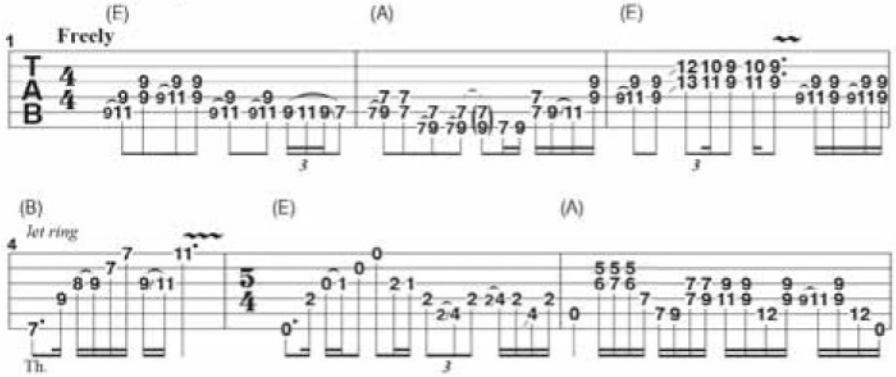


FIG. 2 middle pickup

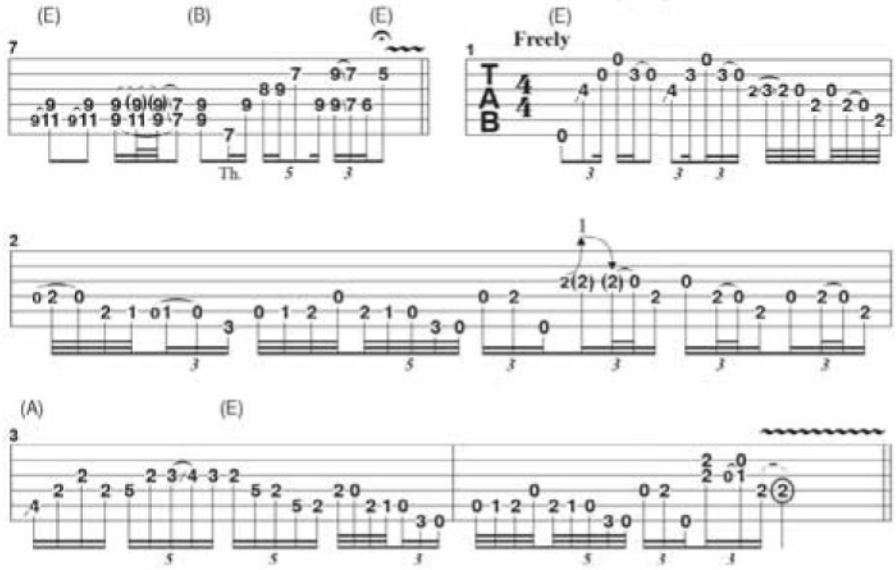
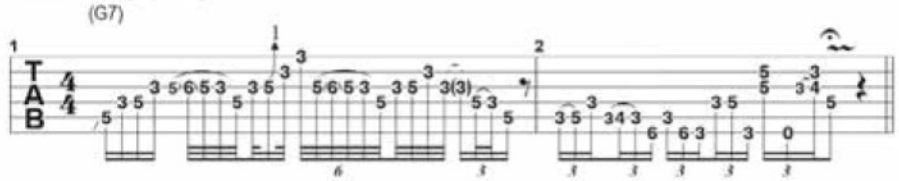


FIG. 3 bridge pickup



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

JEFF FASANO

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2024

THE NEXT LEVEL

How to play the "Winterland" solo

IN THE LAST few columns, we've been investigating my song "Winterland" (*Theme from a Perfect World*) and looked at the tune's intro, verse and chorus sections. I'd now like to present its 16-bar solo, shown in **FIGURE 1**.

I begin the solo with a one-bar pickup that ascends through the first four notes of the E minor pentatonic scale — E, G, A, B — with the B note sustained through the downbeat of bar 1, sounded over the tonic, or "home key," chord, Em.

When soloing, it's important to be aware of the underlying chord progression, as it should dictate the inherent harmony of your specific notes choices. As shown in **FIGURE 2**, the progression here is Em - D/F♯ - C. It's a rather simple i - ♭VII - ♭VI progression (one minor to flat-7 major to flat-6 major), one that has been used in many songs, such as in the solo section of "Stairway to Heaven." I love this progression and it has crept its way into many of my compositions.

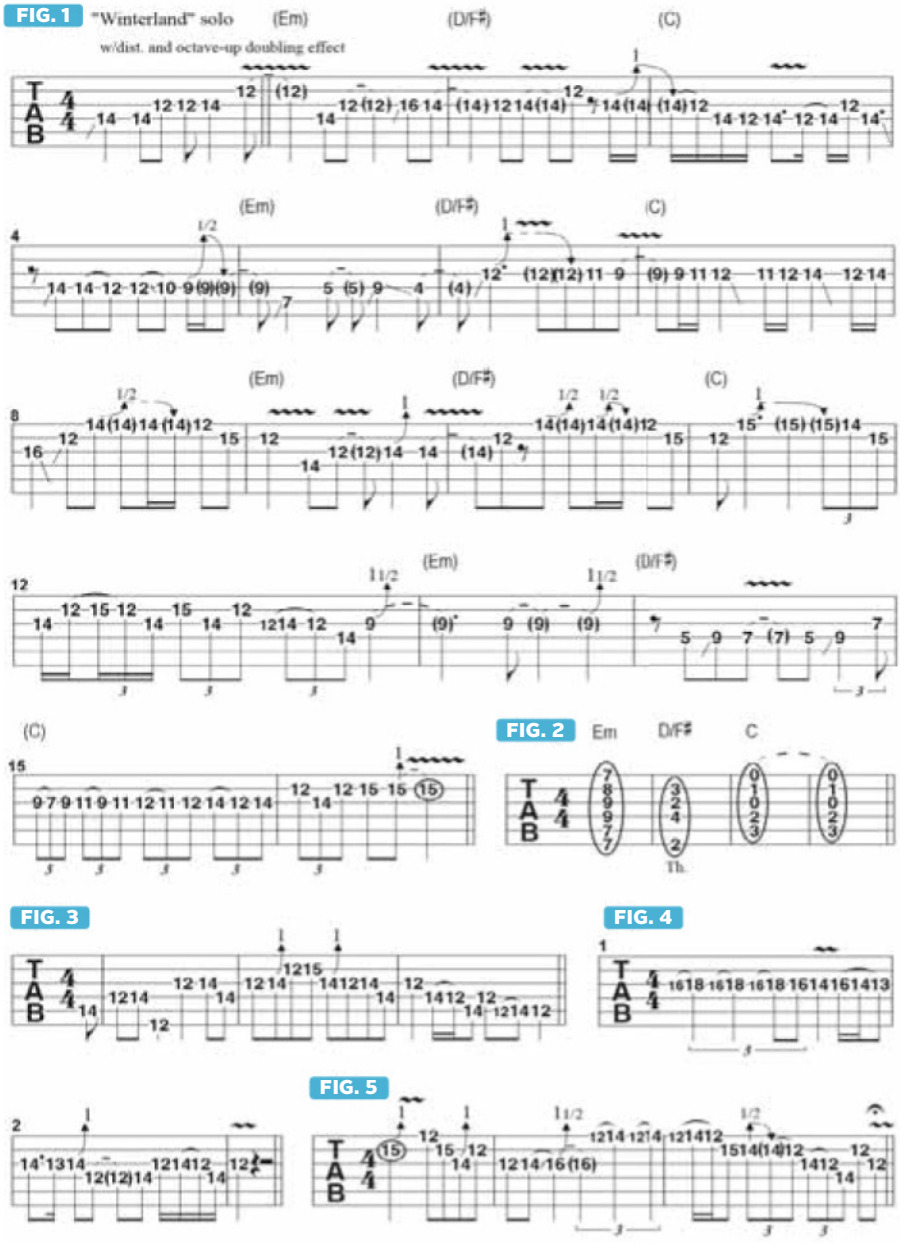
To add expressiveness and intensity to the solo, I'm employing an octave-doubling effect known as the Octave/Fuzz, which is made by a Brazilian company called GNI, together with the bridge humbucking pick-up on my Ibanez AT200 guitar. I've used many different octave pedals over the years, starting with the Roger Mayer spaceship-shaped Octavia, as well as Dunlop's Octavio, which is also a great pedal.

FIGURE 3 offers a demonstration of the basic sound of the Octavia effect. I find that playing at or above the 12th fret and using the guitar's neck pickup serves to enhance the intensity of the octave-doubling effect. One of the greatest and most well-known examples of this effect in action is in Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze" solo, which I reference in the lines played in **FIGURE 4**. It's a rather "ratty" fuzz tone that generates an octave harmonic, and when I add the full-on gain along with the octave effect, the sound takes off into the stratosphere. **FIGURE 5** offers an example of this sound.

Getting back to **FIGURE 1**, most of the solo revolves around E minor pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D), based in 12th position in bars 1-3. Notice how the octave effect enhances the sound of all the slides, bends, pull-offs and vibratos. In bar 4, I slide down the D string and bring in a C note, referencing both the underlying C chord and the E Aeolian mode (E, F♯, G, A, B, C, D).

Melodically, the lines are very simple and sit squarely within these scales. The chord progression is doing the heavy lifting here, in the sense that it's providing the necessary musical quotient to make the solo work. In bar 5 into bar 6, I sustain an F♯ note over the D/F♯ chord, followed with a move up to E in bar 7, which becomes the major 3rd of C.

Bars 9-11 serve as a reprise and melodic development of the opening theme, and in bars 12 into 13 I shift down to 7th position and repeatedly play one-and-a-half-step "overbends" from E to G. At the end of bar 14, I wrap up the solo with an ascending eighth-note triplet figure that climbs up to a high whole-step bend from D to E.



SIMONE CECHETTI

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His latest album, *Electric Truth*, is out now.

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2024

A GOOD REP

Using repetition as a phrasing device

IN THE NEXT few columns, I'd like to discuss three tools I use to strengthen my approach to improvisation. These three things help me to tell better stories with a solo, all of which have nothing to do with note choice or melodic information. They are: *repetition*, where I will repeat a phrase and establish the line as a foundational motif to build upon; *call and response*, wherein I "answer" lines I play with complimentary statements; and "handcuffs," which I envision as painting myself into a musical box. I find that if I set limits on where and what I can play, it forces me to find new alternatives.

Repetition is simply repeating a phrase, developing it as a motif and then continuing to reference it throughout a solo. If I play an idea like **FIGURE 1**, which is a swinging blues phrase played in the key of A and based on the A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G), it immediately establishes itself as a recognizable "theme" due to its hooky simplicity. I'll then be prompted to follow it with the line in **FIGURE 2**, which begins the same way but wraps up with slight melodic twists, ending on the ♭7 (flatted 7th), G, instead of the tonic, A.

FIGURE 3 illustrates what I might play when I reach the IV (four) chord in the blues progression, D7. I again start with the same series of notes and then take a different route in bar 2, ending the phrase on D, the root note of the IV chord.

When I return to the I (one) chord, A7, in bar 5, as shown in **FIGURE 4**, I bring my initial line back into the picture, completing the circle.

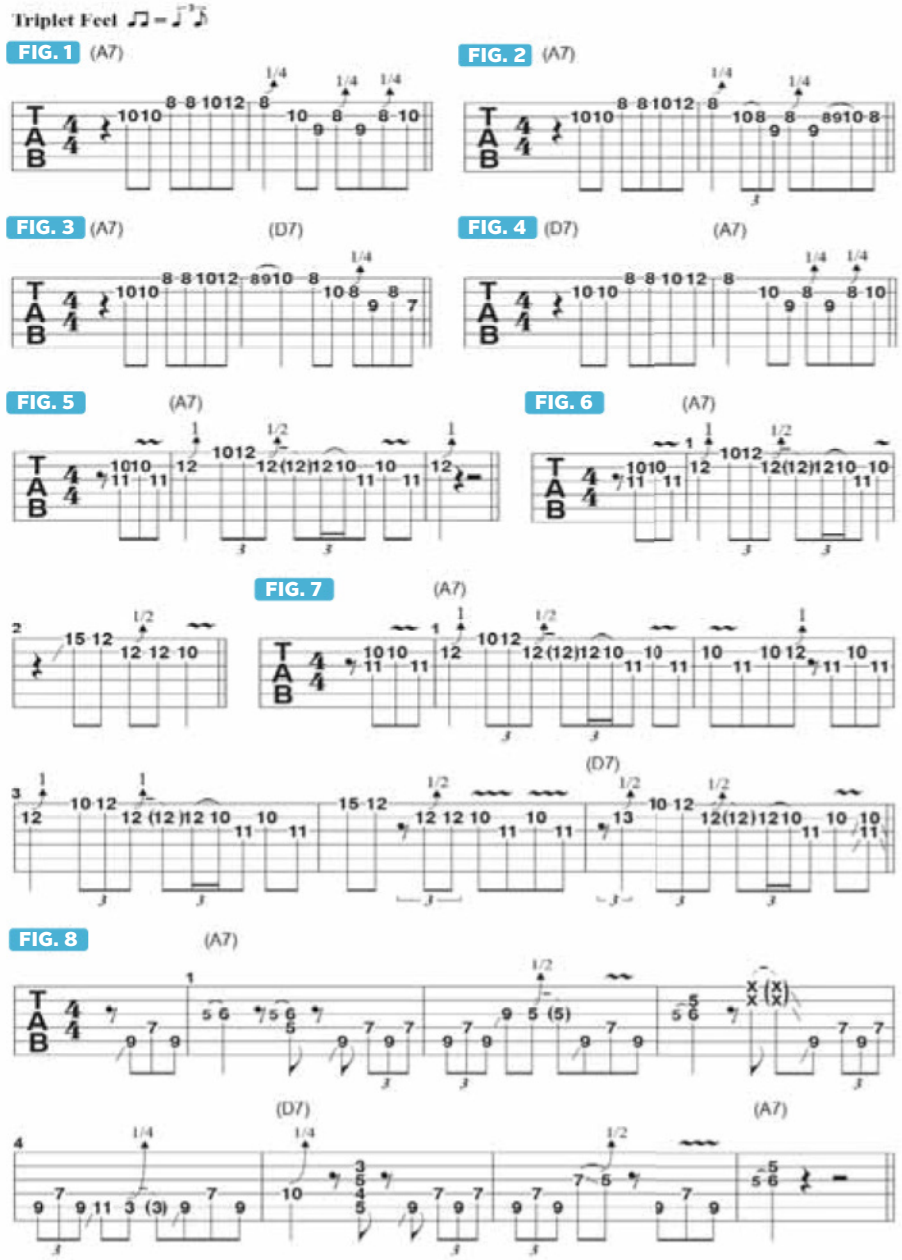
Having a repeated line like this is so useful in the creation of hooks that non-musicians can relate to and will immediately bop their heads and tap their feet to. It has nothing to do with playing flashy licks or unusual note choices; it's about establishing a real narrative in a solo that will draw the listener in.

Let's say I play a B.B. King-style lick, like **FIGURE 5**. This is a short, simple phrase based on A hexatonic major (A, B, C♯, D, E, F♯) and is positioned in what's known as the "B.B. box." If I immediately repeat it, as in **FIGURE 6**, I end the phrase with a twist.

I'll often keep referencing that lick by playing something like **FIGURE 7**, wherein I present three different ideas that all begin the same way. Next thing you know, you're into your second and third chorus and you've created a really successful solo.

Keep in mind that this is still a form of improvisation: whatever lick I play first serves as the theme for that chorus. **FIGURE 8** offers an Albert Collins-style line that serves as an anchor to the entire solo. The melodic line is so strong and hooky, it's almost like I've written an instrumental song around it.

This is a great way to get the ball rolling and to construct solid, memorable solos that take you, and the listener, where you need to go.



OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard. His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS

"PATIENT NUMBER 9"

Ozzy Osbourne (w/Jeff Beck)

WELL-WRITTEN AND ambitiously produced, this title track from the Prince of Darkness' latest studio album brings to mind some of his finest collaborations with the legendary Randy Rhoads, featuring hauntingly beautiful, classical-style chord progressions and melodic themes, powerful guitar riffs and two tasteful solos, compliments of the late, great Jeff Beck, with Andrew Watt and Zakk Wylde also contributing crafty guitar work to the arrangement.

Metallica's Robert Trujillo begins the song on 12-string bass (played with a pick) and lays down a lyrical progression of ringing arpeggios, for which each note played is doubled an octave higher. This is comparable to the way a 12-string guitar works, with its low E, A, D and G strings octave-doubled, except here each of the instrument's four main strings is octave-doubled by two strings, which produces a rich chorusing effect, akin to what you experience with the B and high E strings on a 12-string guitar. You can closely emulate the sound of the 12-string bass on a four-string by using chorus and octave-up doubling effects; or on guitar with chorus and polyphonic octave-down doubling. In any case, in order to play along with the recording, you'll need to tune all your strings down a whole step.

Beck played his two solos (see sections G and L, Gtr. 3) in standard tuning, even though the backing guitar and bass tracks were all recorded in D standard tuning (low to high: D, G, C, F, A, D) and thus sound a whole step lower than written. So Beck had to think and play in a lower key, down two frets. To help you make sense of his note choices, we've included concert-key chord names in brackets during these sections.

Beck's distinctive, slinky phrasing style is showcased in both solos, with his signature string bends and whammy bar manipulations decorating his phrases in very vocal-like ways. While the guitarist famously eschewed the use of a pick in later years, preferring to attack his strings with his bare thumb and fingers, he may have employed a plectrum for the fast tremolo picking in bars 54 and 55.

— JIMMY BROWN

"REBEL YELL"

Billy Idol

THIS ROUSING EARLY Eighties hard rock anthem features guitarist Steve Stevens' ever-tasteful rhythm and lead playing, with tight, catchy riffs and just the right amount of flash and swagger in his licks and fills, which drive the song effectively and melodically without excessive showboating.

Stevens kicks off the tune with a punchy, instantly recognizable repeating riff that's based on a 7th-position box shape of the B minor pentatonic scale (B, D, E, F♯, A). The riff is constructed like a two-hand keyboard part, with two independent components combined into a single figure. Stevens performs this opening passage fingerstyle, using his thumb to pick the low melody notes while holding down a pinkie double-stop at the 10th fret on the top two strings, which he fingerpicks with his 2nd and 3rd fingers in a steady eighth-note rhythm. Practice playing the top and bottom parts separately at first, then combine them, starting out slowly and gradually ramping up the tempo to match that of the recording.

When performing the song live, Stevens momentarily clasps and stores his pick between his 1st and 2nd fingers during these opening four bars then quickly deploys it to playing position (between the thumb and 1st finger) during beat 3 of bar 4, in order to switch to playing the Gtr. 2 part, forgoing the last three fingerpicked double-stops and instead just sliding down from the F♯ note. This move is tricky at first, as you only have a split second to retrieve the pick, but it becomes easy to do with muscle memory.

During the pre-verse riff that immediately follows, beginning in bar 5, Stevens makes great use of palm muted downstrokes (P.M.) on the low E string and, alternately, slight "pinch harmonics" (P.H.) applied to the unmuted D note on the A string's 5th fret. To achieve the desired harmonic squeal, you'll want to graze the string with the tip of your pick-hand thumb while picking a downstroke, and do so at a particular point on the string where a harmonic node resides, which, with a bit of hunting, can be found in the vicinity of the neck pickup.

— JIMMY BROWN

"RIDERS ON THE STORM"

The Doors (for solo guitar)

GROWING UP IN the U.S. in the Seventies, I was deeply impacted and influenced by rock and roll, folk, country, blues, jazz and other styles of music. It was only much later that I grew to love classical music and specifically expressed it through the guitar.

For centuries, guitarists have been adapting popular songs into solo instrumental arrangements, so I thought I would try my hand with some of the songs that had resonated so deeply with me in my youth. My goal with these arrangements — this being one of 15 — was to get as close to the recorded song as possible. I try to mimic the vocal gestures, as well as cover the solos note for note. The guitar solo at section D is almost completely verbatim to what Robby Krieger played, but the keyboard solo (section G) had to be significantly reduced out of practical considerations.

If you can pick the strings effectively with your right-hand fingers, then this arrangement works equally well on either a nylon- or steel-string guitar. One of the biggest challenges is thumb-picking the repeating bass line beneath the fingerpicked chord-melody figures. Practice the two parts separately and slowly at first, then put them together and gradually increase the tempo. And be sure to check out my performance video on YouTube, which includes a lot of revealing close-up playing footage.

Another tricky passage that can potentially trip you up if you don't prepare for it well is the cascading 16th-note run that happens in bars 9 and 10, and again in bars 94 and 95. It's important to have a well-planned fingering scheme for both hands here. Start by tackling the first four notes, then add two more at a time, with plenty of patient repetition.

The dreamy ending chords at section K, some of which combine fretted notes with natural harmonics (N.H.), require very precise finger placement, in order to get every note to ring clearly. Good luck, and enjoy!

— ANDREW ELIOT ZOHN

DM, The Jo and George Jeter Distinguished Chair in Guitar, Schwob School of Music, Columbus State University

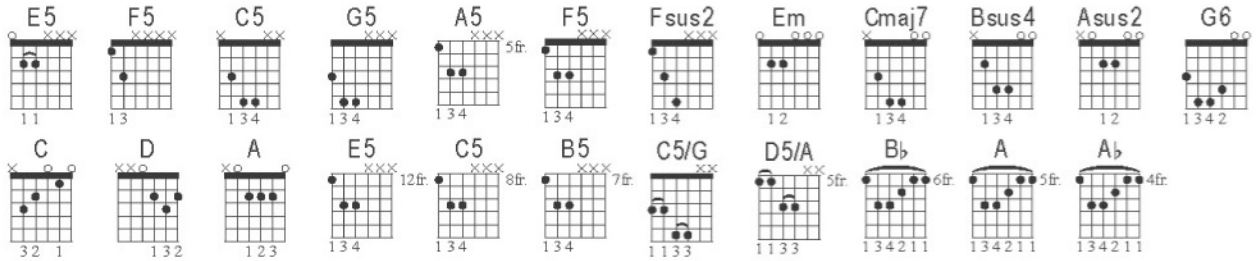
"PATIENT NUMBER 9"

Ozzy Osbourne (featuring Jeff Beck)

As heard on **PATIENT NUMBER 9**

Words and Music by ALI TAMPOSI, ANDREW WATT, CHAD SMITH, JOHN OSBOURNE *and* ROBERT TRUJILLO • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

Gtrs. 1, 2, 4, and 5 are tuned down one whole step (low to high: D, G, C, F, A, D) and sound one whole step lower than written.
Gtr. 3 is in standard tuning (low to high: E, A, D, G, B, E).
Bass is tuned down one whole step (low to high: D, G, C, F) and sounds one whole step lower than written.



A **Intro** (0:00)

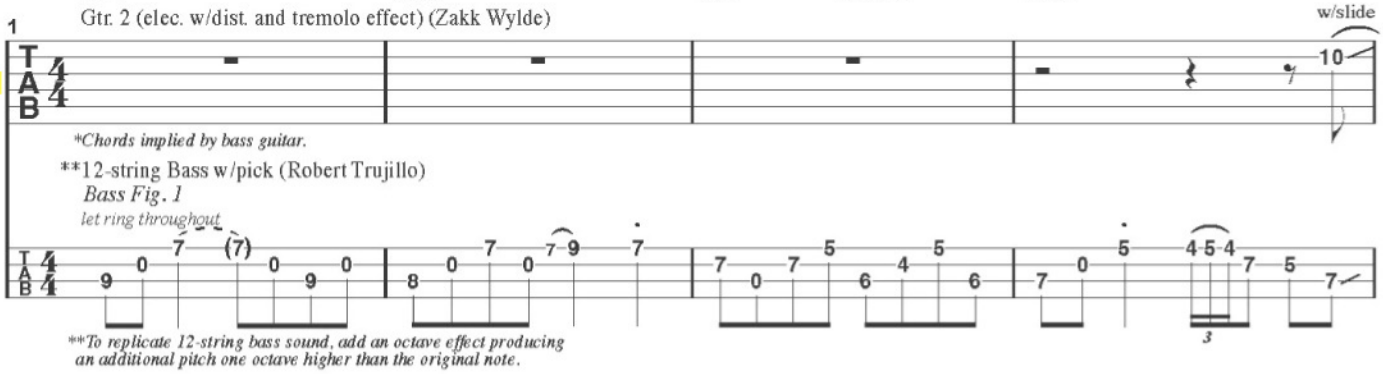
Moderately Slow ♩ = 85

Spoken: **Is there a way out of here?** **Hey how long you been here** **I wanna go home** **Hey ha ha ha**

D/F♯ Dm/F Am D♯dim7 Am/E

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist. and tremolo effect) (Zakk Wylde)

w/slide



**Chords implied by bass guitar.*

***12-string Bass w/pick (Robert Trujillo)*

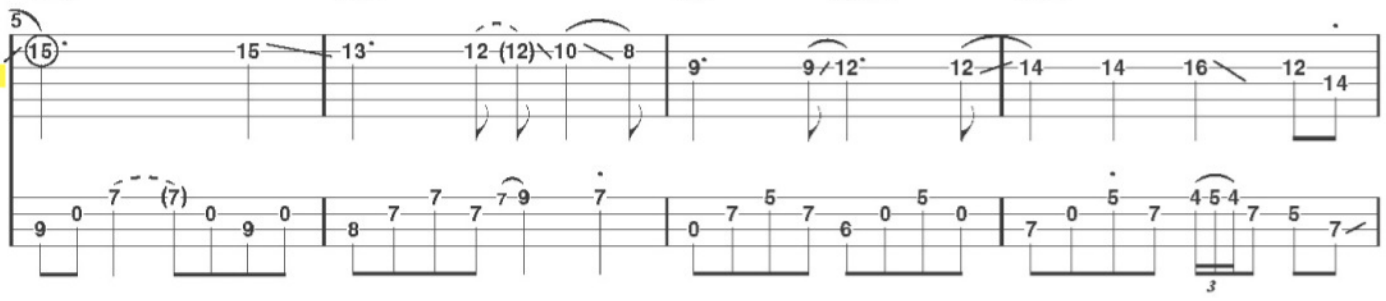
Bass Fig. 1

let ring throughout

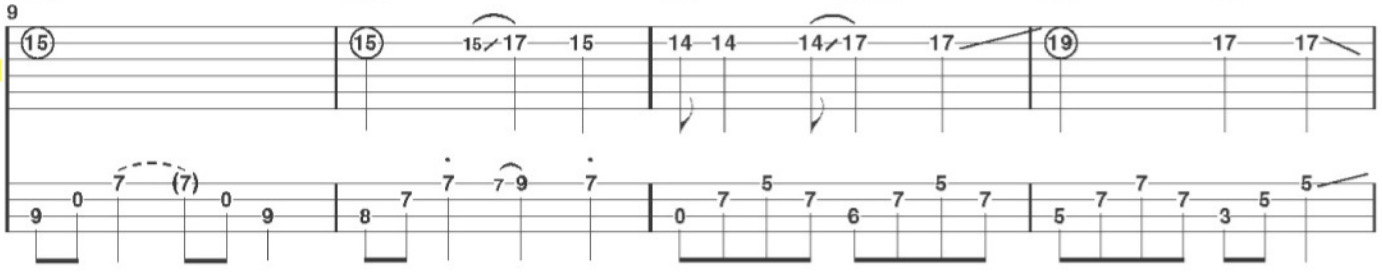
***To replicate 12-string bass sound, add an octave effect producing an additional pitch one octave higher than the original note.*

Excuse me Could you tell me how to get out of here?

D/F♯ Dm/F Am D♯dim7 Am/E



D/F♯ Dm/F Am D♯dim7 D5 C5



"PATIENT NUMBER 9"
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I want to go home Mommy mommy

D/F♯ Dm/F Fm/A♭

13

end Bass Fig. 1

B (0:42, 2:12)

1. Every
2. When the

Am G/A F♯m/A F/A

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 1 second time (see below)

*Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.) (Andrew Watt)

Rhy. Fig. 1

end Rhy. Fig. 1

16

*Gtr. 1 doubled one octave higher via production overdub.

4-string Bass

C **Verses** (0:54, 2:24)

hallway's painted white as the light that will guide you to your help Making
sun goes down the animals cry That's a sound you won't forget It's a

Am G/A F♯m/A F/A

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 16)

20 Bass

*Additional production overdub doubles Gtr. 1 one octave below original notes.

friends with strangers inside my mind 'cause they seem to know me well
mirror's face you don't recognize It'll get you in the end

Am Bm/A C/A Dm/A

Gtr. 1

24

Bass

Fill 1 (2:12)

(Am) (G/A) (F♯m/A) (F/A)

Gtr. 2 (w/dist., sub-octave, and delay effects)

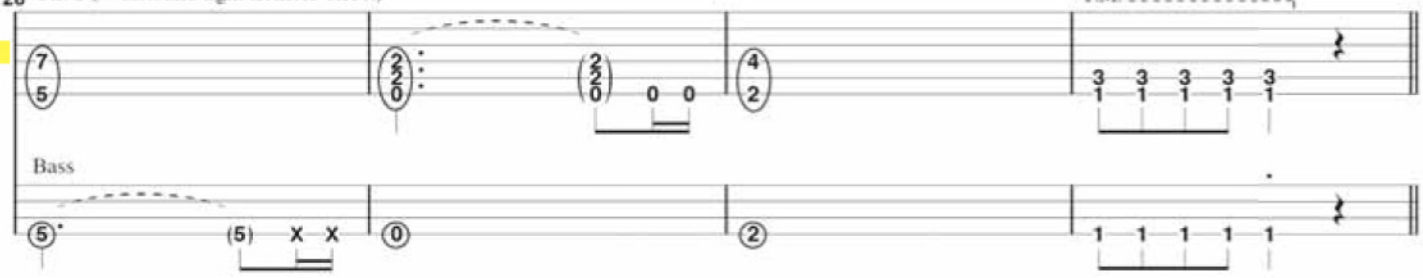
D **Pre-chorus** (1:16, 2:46)

Hiding the pills inside your mouth Swallow 'em down then spit them out I hear the laughter scream and shout No tomorrow / Someone help me

N.C. (A5) E5 N.C. (F♯5) F5

Gtr. 1 plays first three bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 16)

28 Gtr. 2 (w/dist. and light tremolo effect) Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M.



Bass

E **1st and 2nd Choruses** (1:27, 2:58)

When they call your name better run and hide

C5 G5 A5

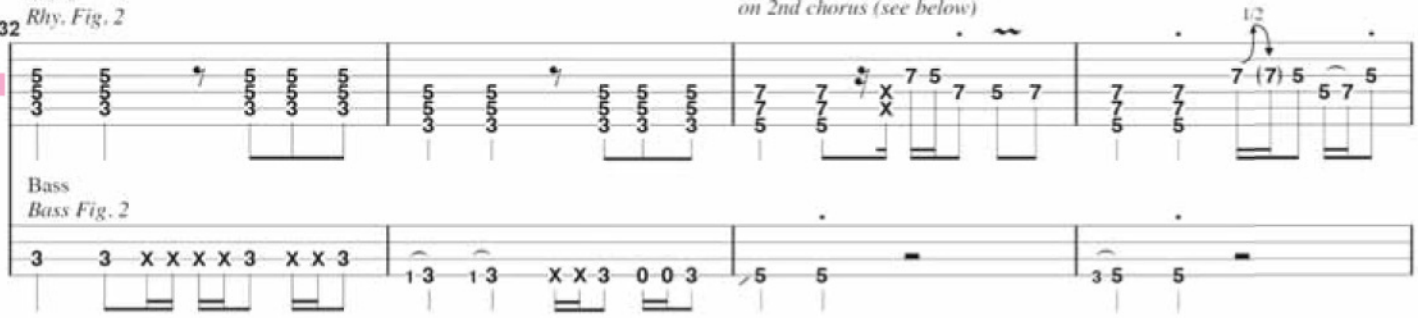
Gtr. 2 plays Fill 2 on 2nd chorus (see below)

Gtr. 1

Rhy. Fig. 2

Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 on 2nd chorus (see below)

32



Bass

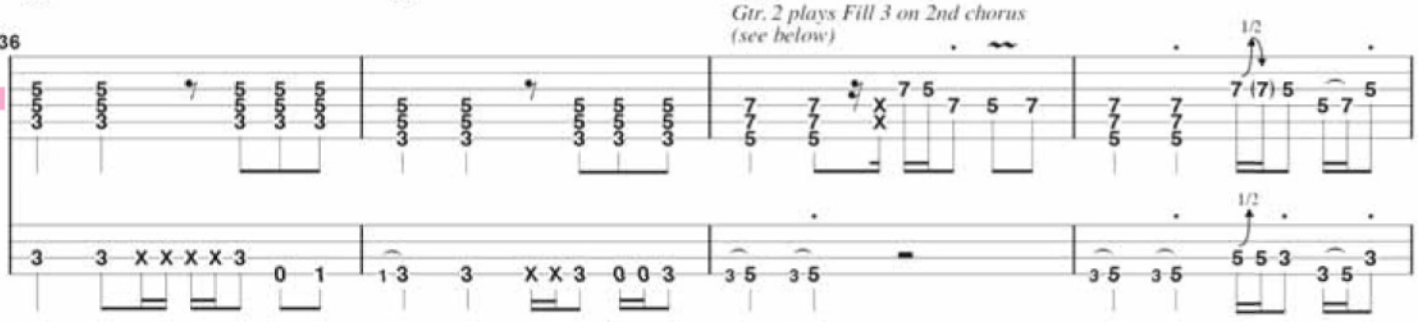
Bass Fig. 2

Tell you you're insane You believe their lies

C5 G5 A5

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 3 on 2nd chorus (see below)

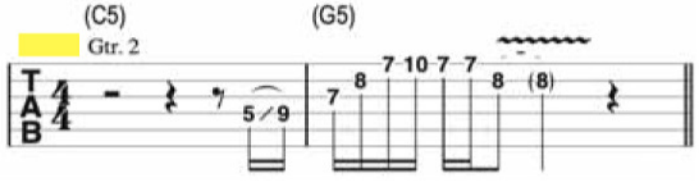
36



Fill 2 (2:58)

(C5) (G5)

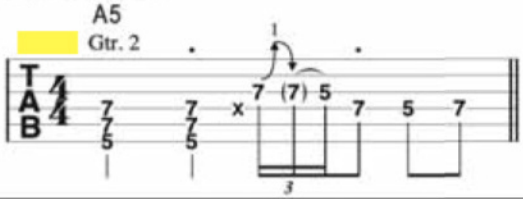
Gtr. 2



Rhy. Fill 1 (3:03)

A5

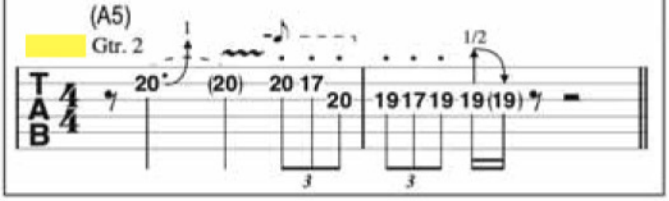
Gtr. 2



Fill 3 (3:15)

(A5)

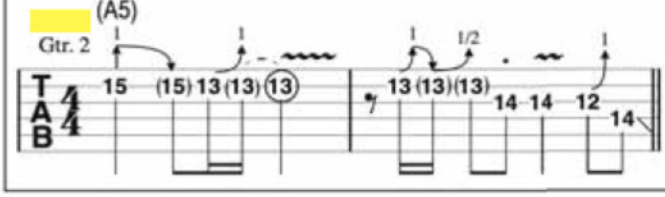
Gtr. 2

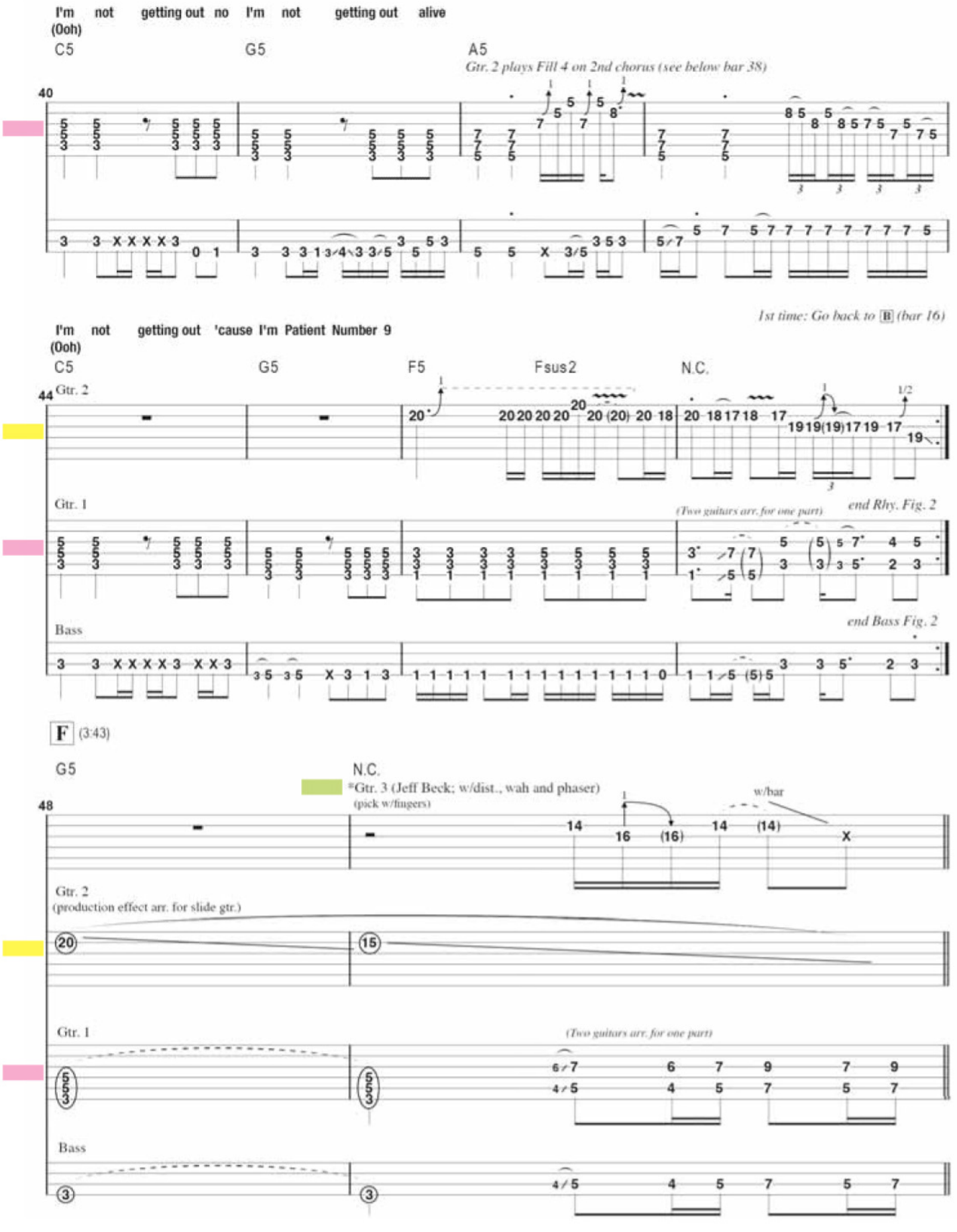


Fill 4 (3:26)

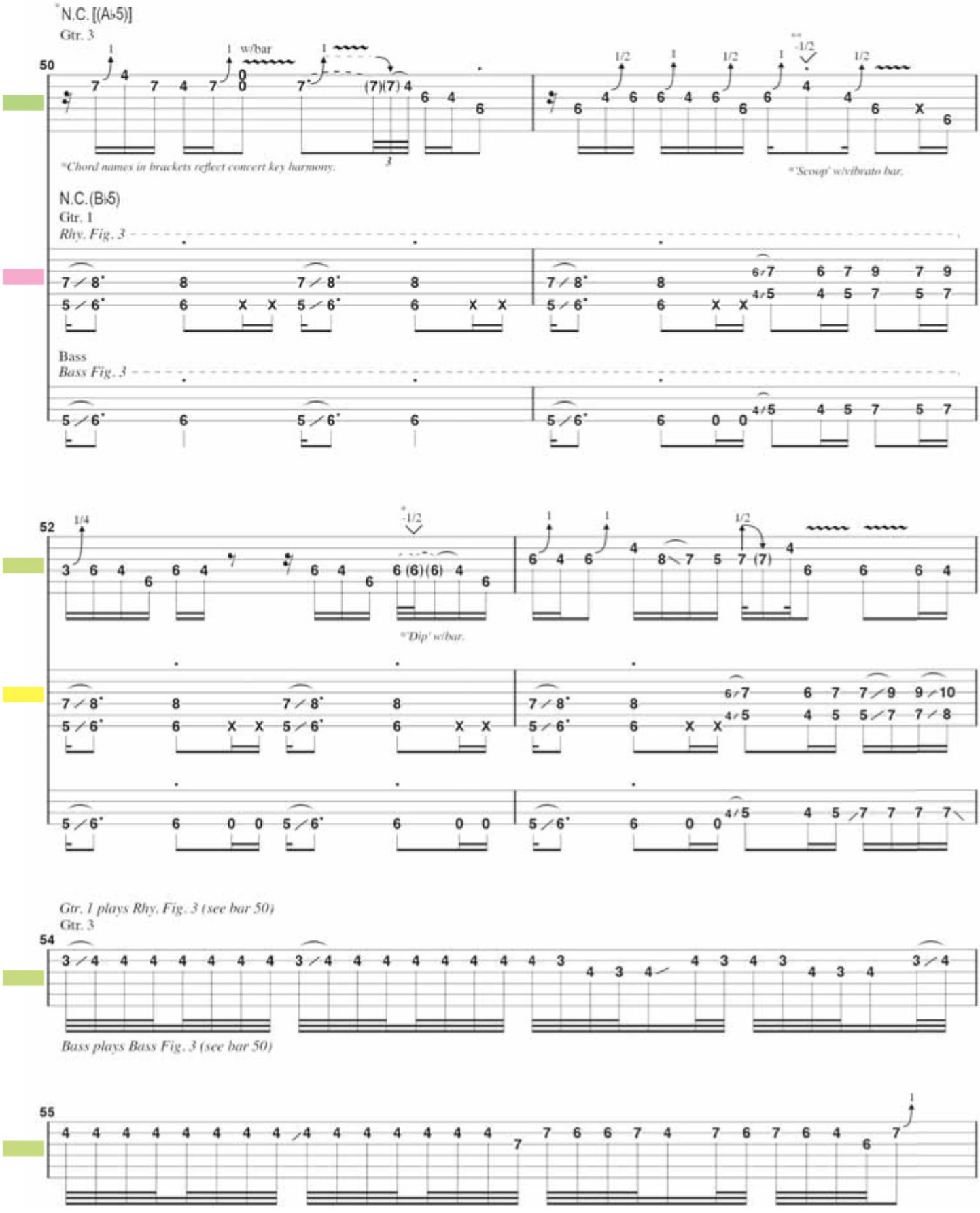
(A5)

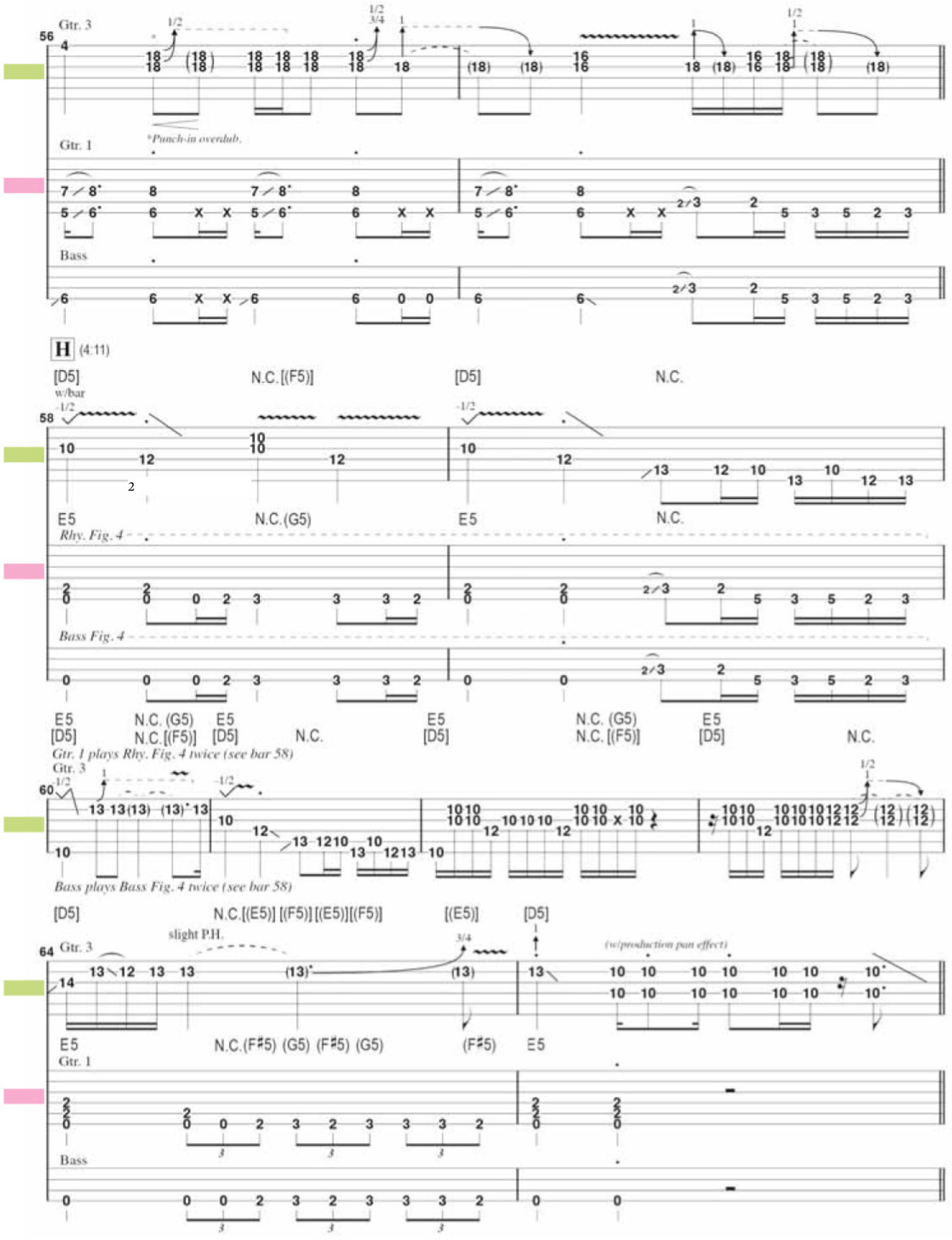
Gtr. 2

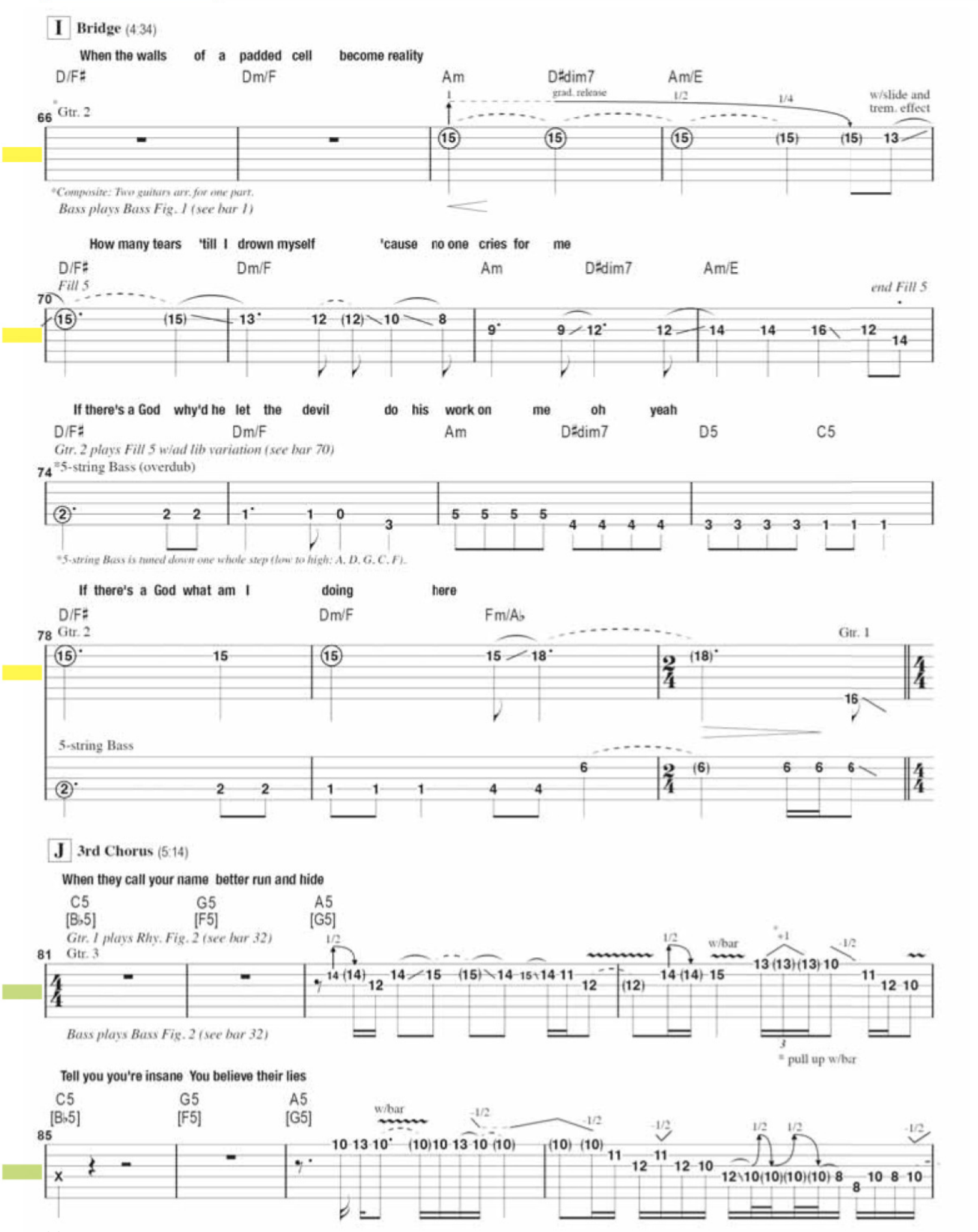


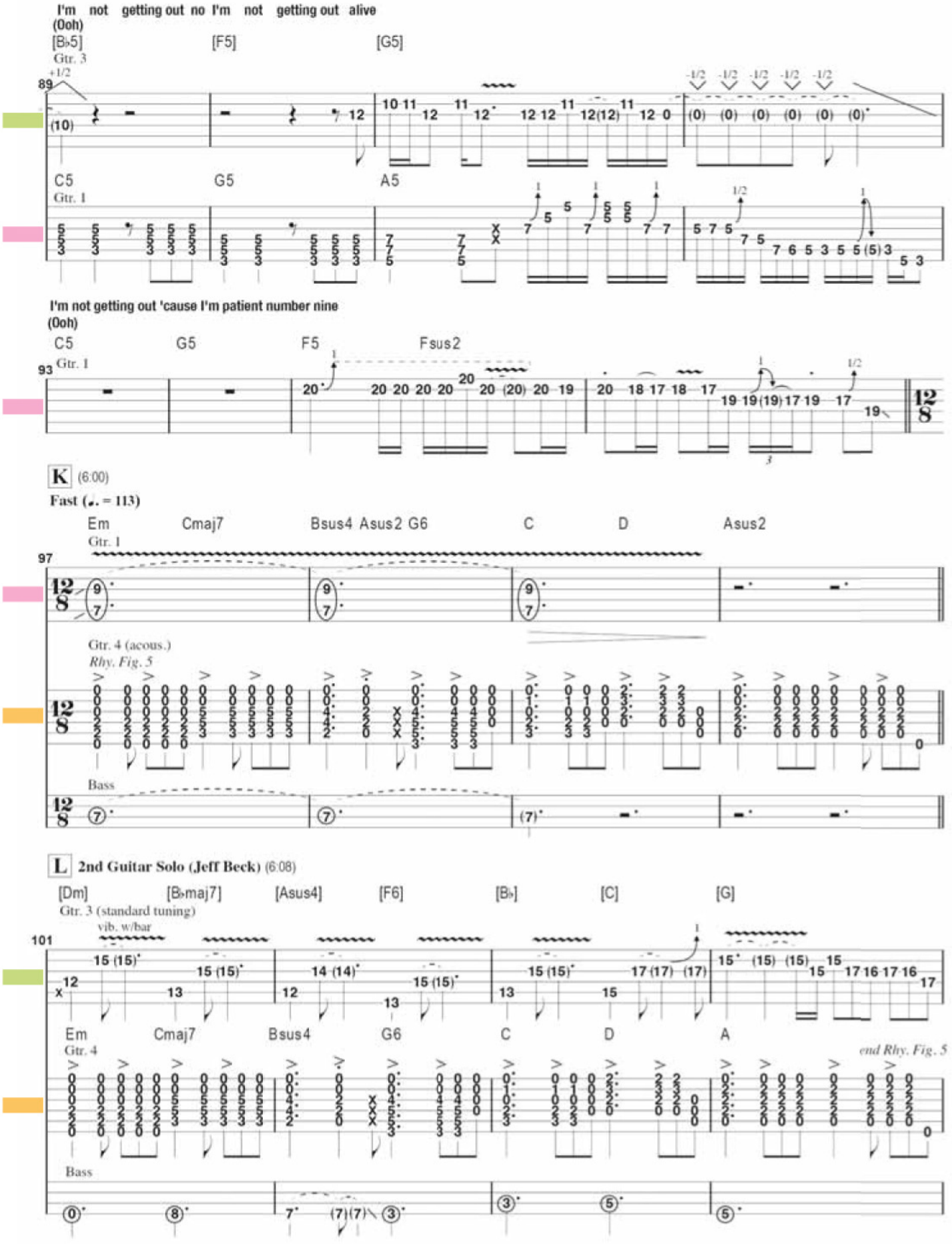

I'm not getting out no I'm not getting out alive
(Ooh)
C5
G5
A5
Gtr. 2 plays Fill 4 on 2nd chorus (see below bar 38)
40
1st time: Go back to B (bar 16)
I'm not getting out 'cause I'm Patient Number 9
(Ooh)
C5
G5
F5
Fsus2
N.C.
44
Gtr. 2
Gtr. 1
(Two guitars arr. for one part)
end Rhy. Fig. 2
Bass
end Bass Fig. 2
F (3:43)
G5
N.C.
*Gtr. 3 (Jeff Beck; w/dist., wah and phaser)
(pick w/fingers)
48
w/bar
Gtr. 2
(production effect arr. for slide gtr.)
Gtr. 1
(Two guitars arr. for one part)
Bass

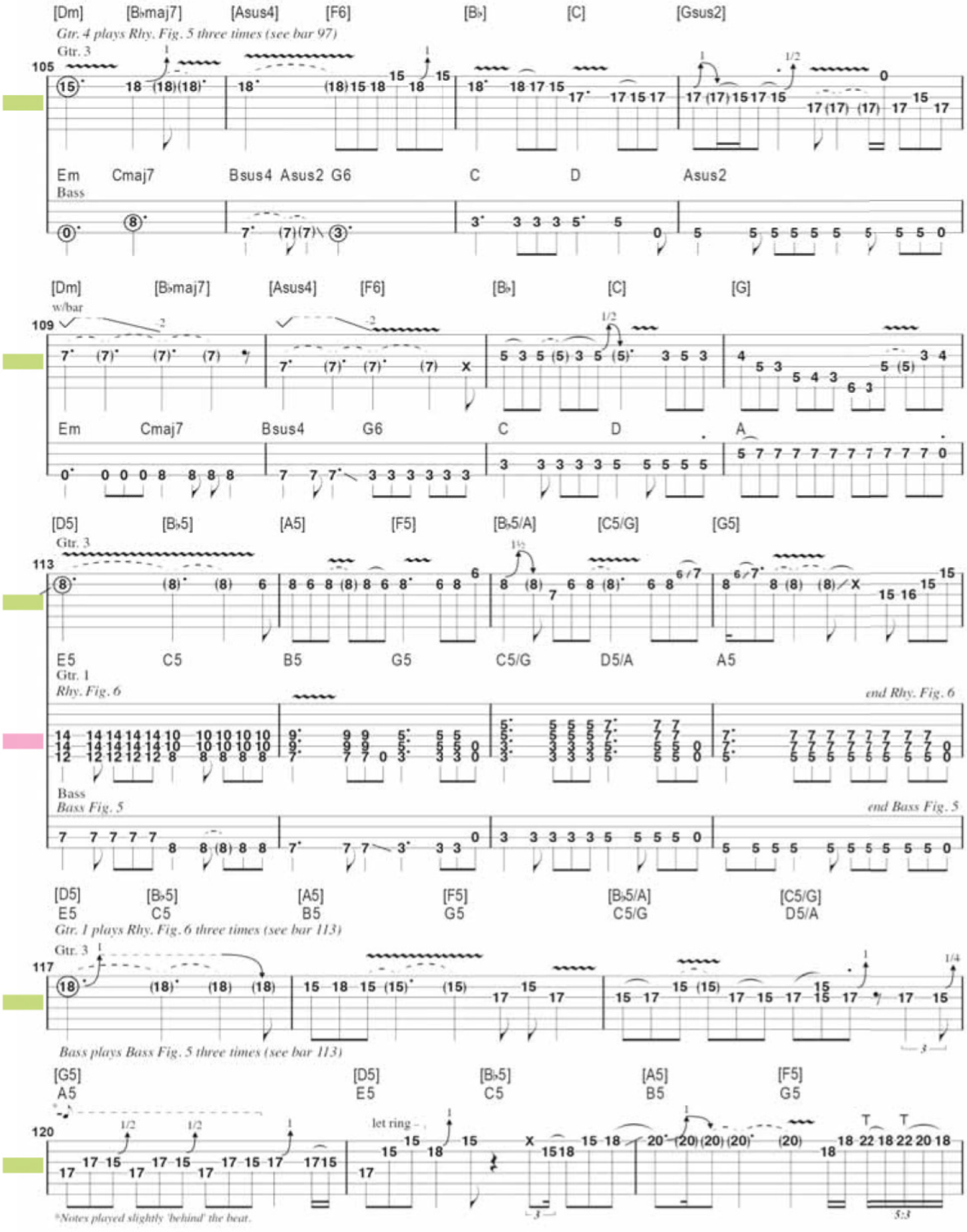
G 1st Guitar Solo (feat. Jeff Beck) (3:48)

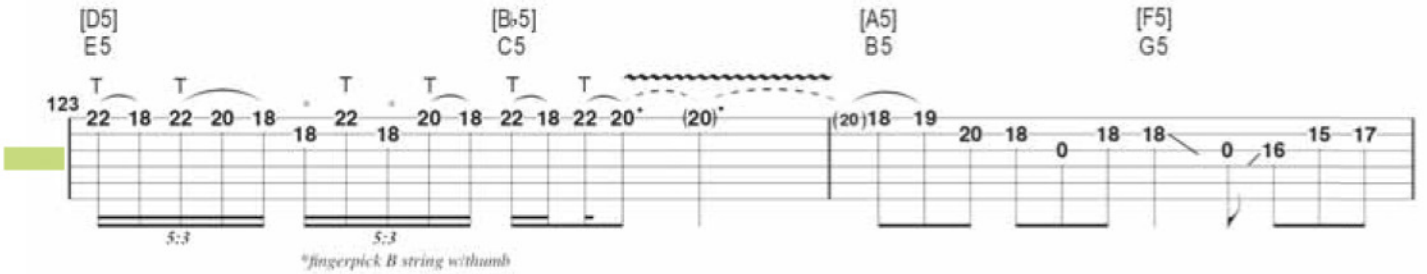


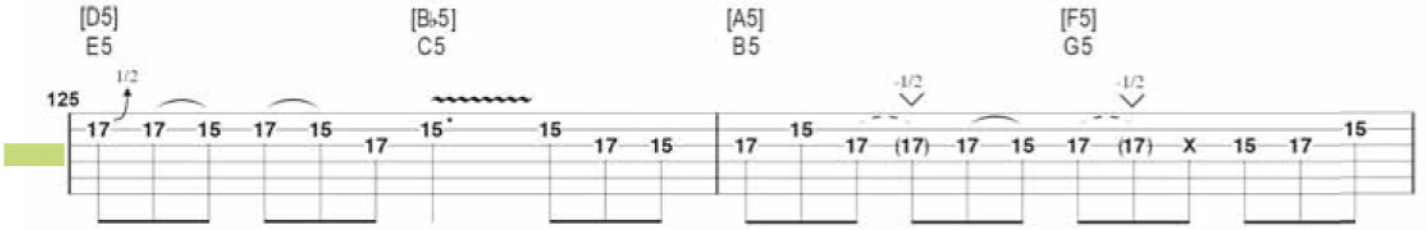

Gtr. 3
Gtr. 1
*Punch-in overdub.
Bass
H (4:11)
[D5]
N.C.[(F5)]
[D5]
N.C.
w/bar
E5
N.C.(G5)
E5
N.C.
Rhy. Fig. 4
Bass Fig. 4
E5 [D5]
N.C. (G5) N.C.[(F5)]
E5 [D5]
N.C.
E5 [D5]
N.C. (G5) N.C.[(F5)]
E5 [D5]
N.C.
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 twice (see bar 58)
Gtr. 3
Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 twice (see bar 58)
[D5]
N.C.[(E5)] [(F5)] [(E5)][(F5)]
[(E5)]
[D5]
slight P.H.
(w/production pan effect)
Gtr. 3
E5
N.C.(F♯5) (G5) (F♯5) (G5)
(F♯5)
E5
Gtr. 1
Bass

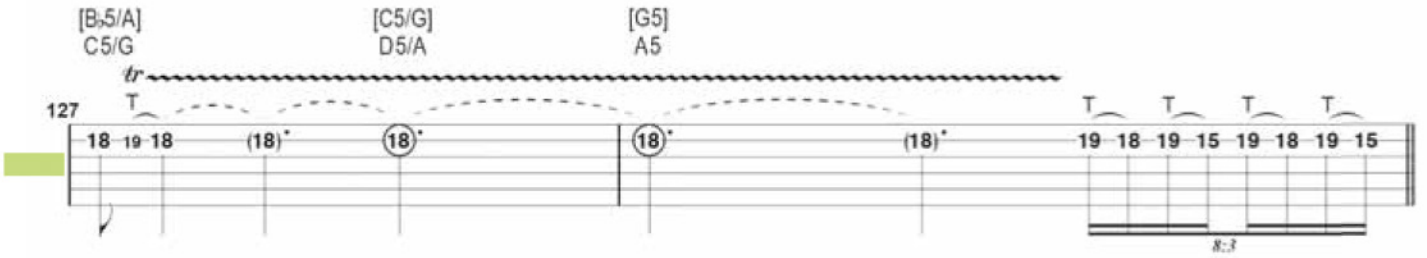

I Bridge (4:34)
When the walls of a padded cell become reality
D/F♯ Dm/F Am D♯dim7 Am/E
grad. release
w/slide and trem. effect
66 Gtr. 2
*Composite: Two guitars arr. for one part.
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)
How many tears 'till I drown myself 'cause no one cries for me
D/F♯ Dm/F Am D♯dim7 Am/E
Fill 5
end Fill 5
70
If there's a God why'd he let the devil do his work on me oh yeah
D/F♯ Dm/F Am D♯dim7 D5 C5
Gtr. 2 plays Fill 5 w/ad lib variation (see bar 70)
*5-string Bass (overdub)
74
*5-string Bass is tuned down one whole step (low to high: A, D, G, C, F).
If there's a God what am I doing here
D/F♯ Dm/F Fm/A♭
78 Gtr. 2
Gtr. 1
5-string Bass
J 3rd Chorus (5:14)
When they call your name better run and hide
C5 [B♭5] G5 [F5] A5 [G5]
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 32)
81 Gtr. 3
w/bar
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 32)
* pull up w/bar
Tell you you're insane You believe their lies
C5 [B♭5] G5 [F5] A5 [G5]
w/bar
85


I'm not getting out no I'm not getting out alive
(Ooh)
[B♭5] [F5] [G5]
Gtr. 3
+1/2
89
(10)
C5 G5 A5
Gtr. 1
I'm not getting out 'cause I'm patient number nine
(Ooh)
C5 G5 F5 Fsus2
93
Gtr. 1
K (6:00)
Fast (♩. = 113)
Em Cmaj7 Bsus4 Asus2 G6 C D Asus2
97
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 4 (acous.)
Rhy. Fig. 5
Bass
L 2nd Guitar Solo (Jeff Beck) (6:08)
[Dm] [B♭maj7] [Asus4] [F6] [B♭] [C] [G]
Gtr. 3 (standard tuning)
vib. w/bar
101
Em Cmaj7 Bsus4 G6 C D A
Gtr. 4
end Rhy. Fig. 5
Bass

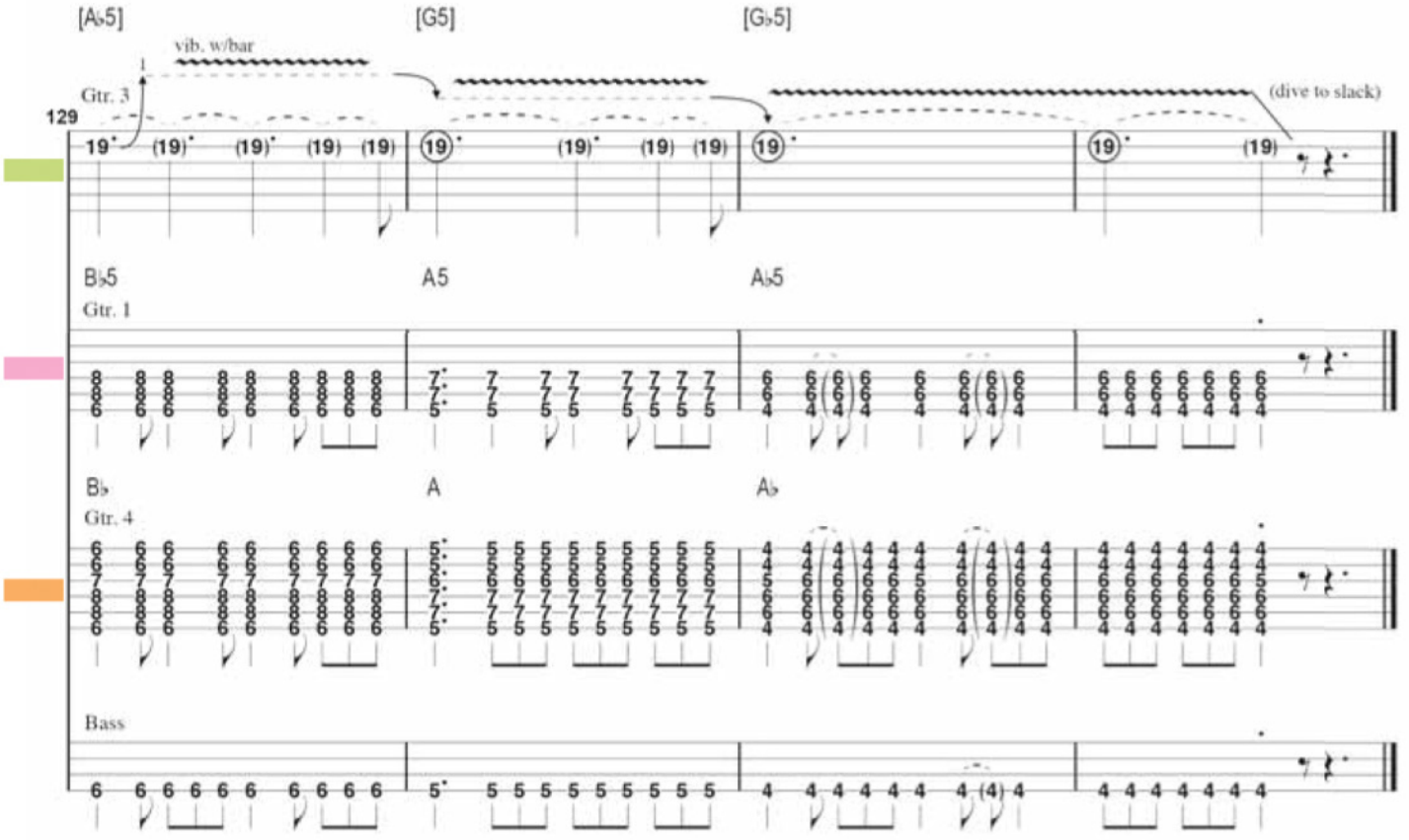

[Dm] [B♭maj7] [Asus4] [F6] [B♭] [C] [Gsus2]
Gtr. 4 plays Rhy. Fig. 5 three times (see bar 97)
Gtr. 3
105
Em Cmaj7 Bsus4 Asus2 G6 C D Asus2
Bass
[Dm] [B♭maj7] [Asus4] [F6] [B♭] [C] [G]
w/bar
109
Em Cmaj7 Bsus4 G6 C D A
[D5] [B♭5] [A5] [F5] [B♭5/A] [C5/G] [G5]
Gtr. 3
113
E5 C5 B5 G5 C5/G D5/A A5
Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 6
end Rhy. Fig. 6
Bass
Bass Fig. 5
end Bass Fig. 5
[D5] [B♭5] [A5] [F5] [B♭5/A] [C5/G]
E5 C5 B5 G5 C5/G D5/A
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 6 three times (see bar 113)
Gtr. 3
117
Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 three times (see bar 113)
[G5] [D5] [B♭5] [A5] [F5]
A5 E5 C5 B5 G5
120
let ring
*Notes played slightly 'behind' the beat.


[D5]
E5
[B♭5]
C5
[A5]
B5
[F5]
G5
123
5:3
5:3
*fingerpick B string w/thumb


[D5]
E5
[B♭5]
C5
[A5]
B5
[F5]
G5
125
1/2
-1/2
-1/2


[B♭5/A]
C5/G
[C5/G]
D5/A
[G5]
A5
tr
127
8:3

M (7:08)

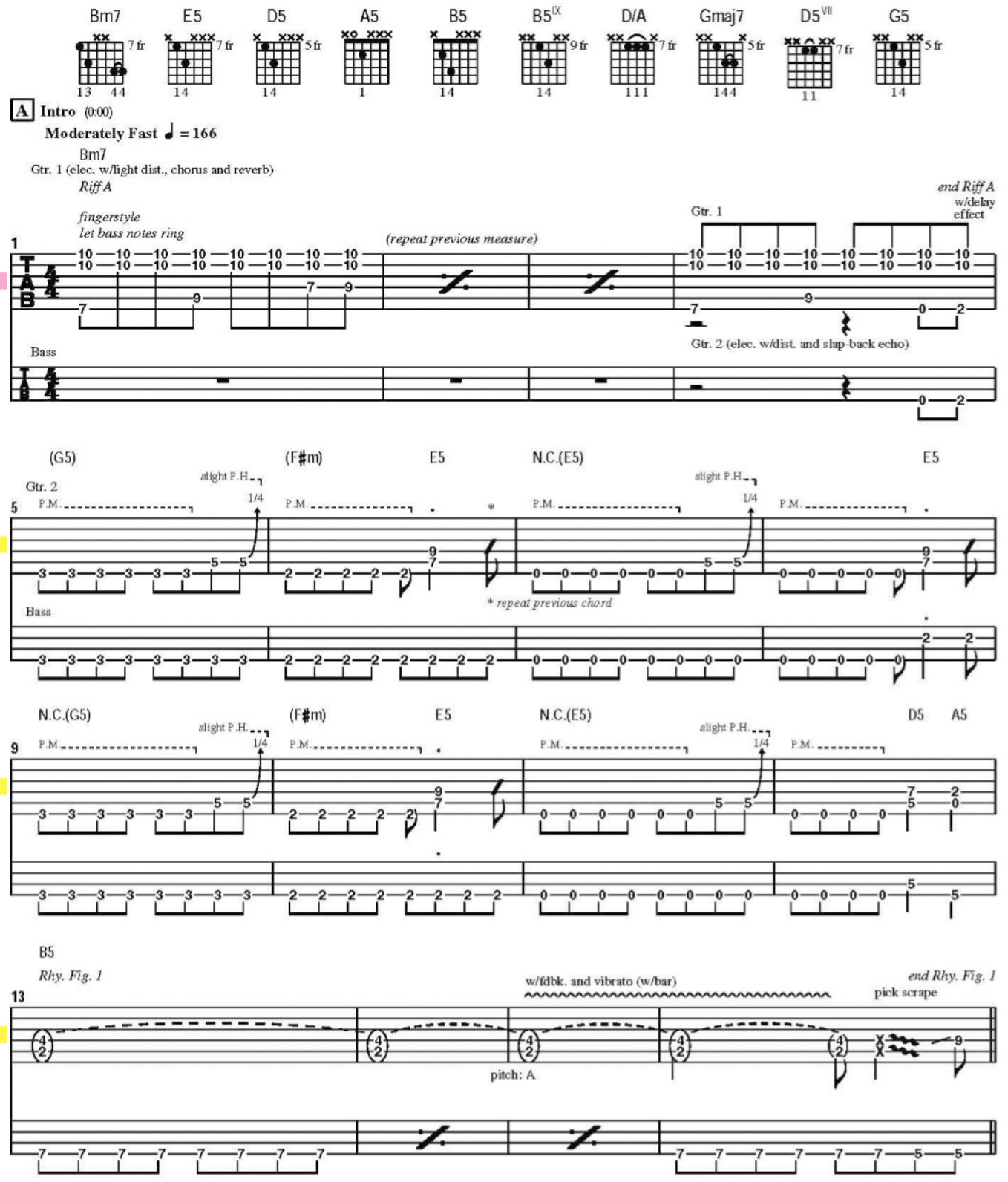

[A♭5]
[G5]
[G♭5]
vib. w/bar
Gtr. 3
129
(dive to slack)
B♭5
A5
A♭5
Gtr. 1
B♭
A
A♭
Gtr. 4
Bass

"REBEL YELL"

Billy Idol

As heard on **REBEL YELL**

Words and Music by BILLY IDOL *and* STEVE STEVENS • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN



"REBEL YELL"
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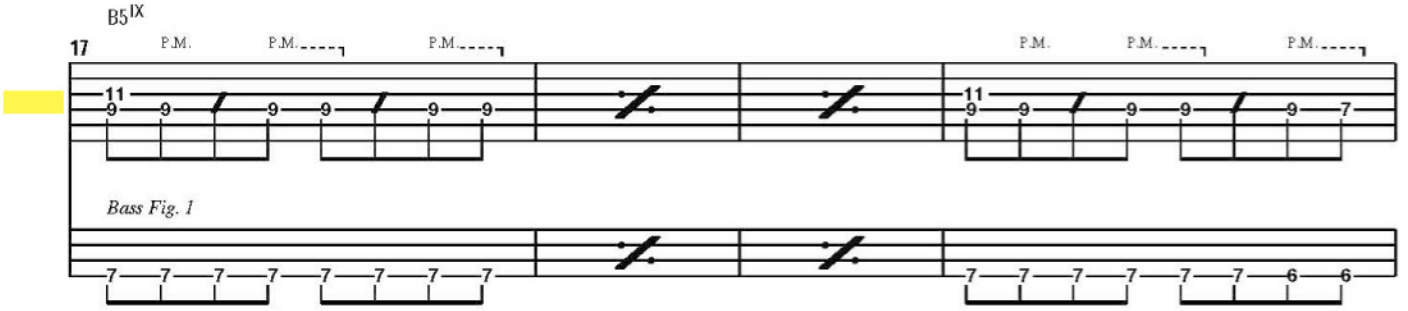
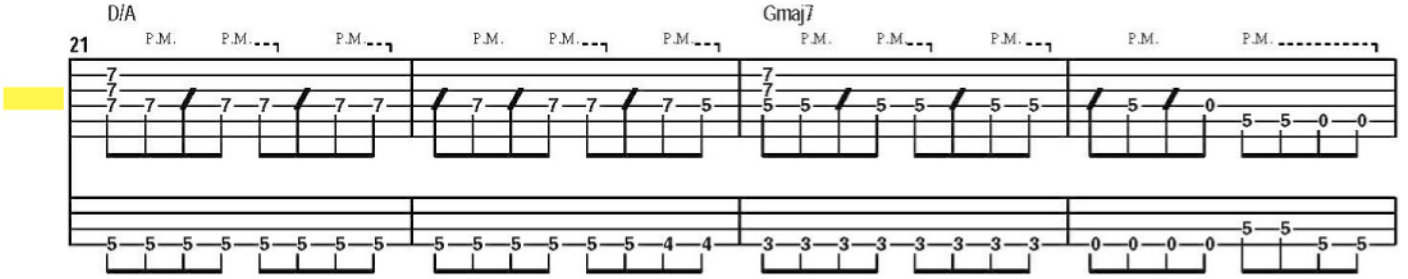
B **Verses** (0:23, 1:15)

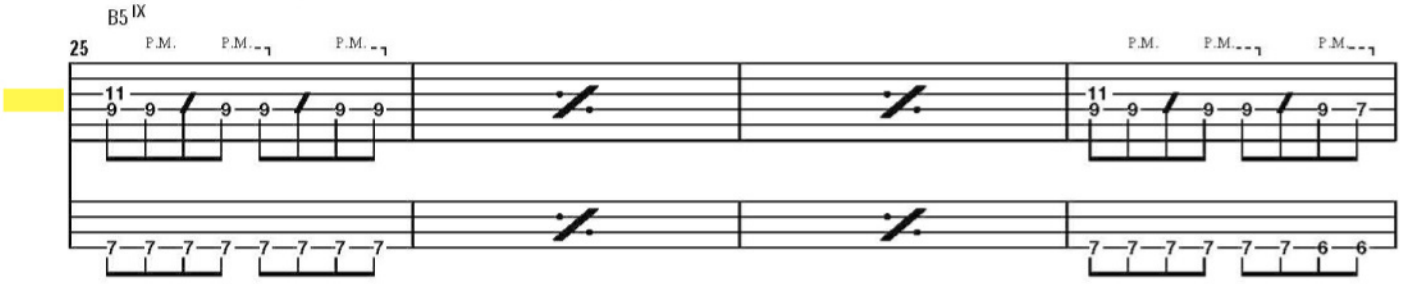
1. Last night a little dancer came dancin' to my door
2. She don't like slavery She won't sit and beg



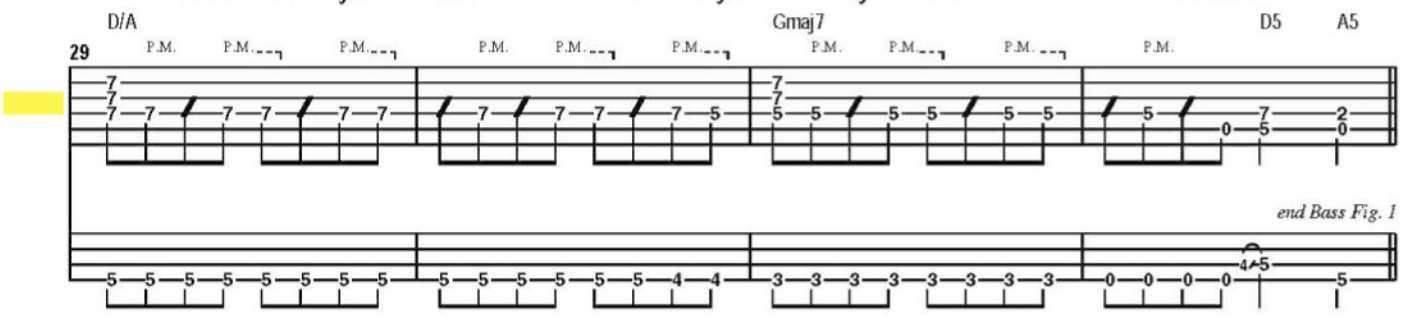
Last night a little angel came pumping on the floor
But when I'm tired and lonely she sees me to bed



She said "A - come baby I got a license for love
What set you free and brought you to me babe



And if it expires pray help from above" because
What set you free I need you here by me because



C **Chorus** (0:46, 1:38, 3:50)

(1.) in the midnight hour she cried more more more
(2.) in the midnight hour babe more more more

B5 B5 IX

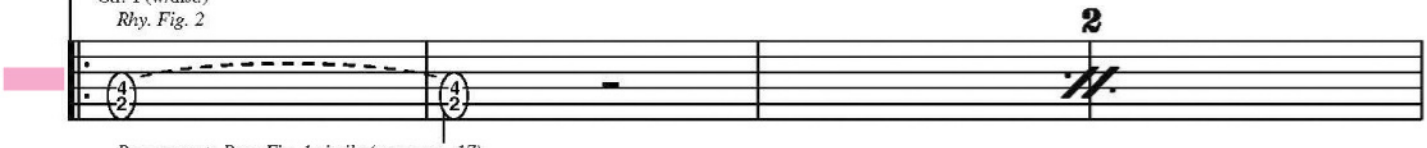
Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 2a *(repeat previous two measures)*

33

Gtr. 1 (w/dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 2



Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 simile (see meas. 17)

(2nd time on 2nd chorus) skip ahead to **E**

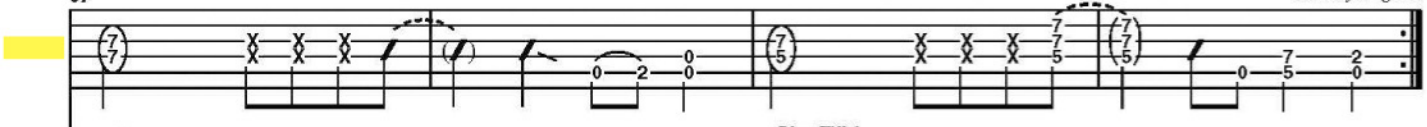
(2nd time on 3rd chorus) skip ahead to outro **J**

With a rebel yell she cried more more more
With a rebel yell more more more Wow
More more

D5 VII G5 Gmaj7 D5 A5

37

end Rhy. Fig. 2a



w/bar *Rhy. Fill 1* *end Rhy. Fig. 2*

D (1:09)

more

go back to verse **B**

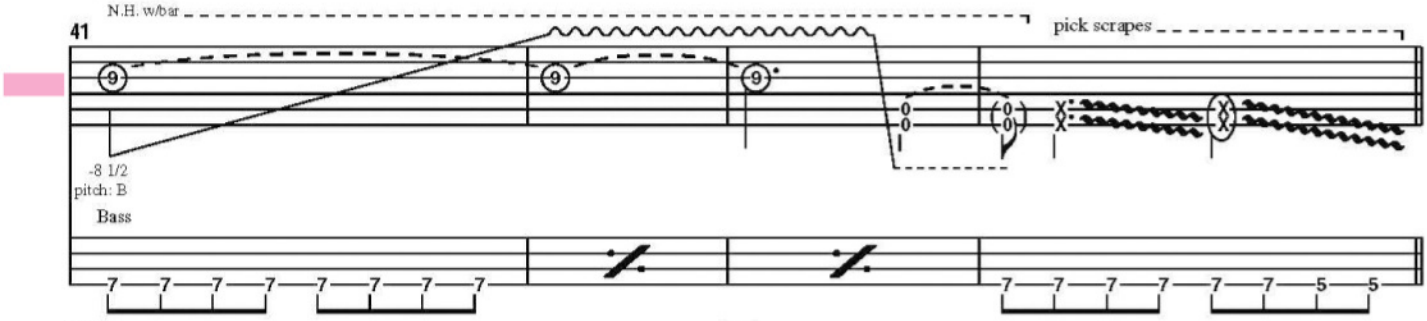
B5

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see meas. 13)

Gtr. 1

N.H. w/bar pick scrapes

41



-8 1/2
pitch: B

Bass

E (1:58)

more more more

F **Bridge** (2:01)

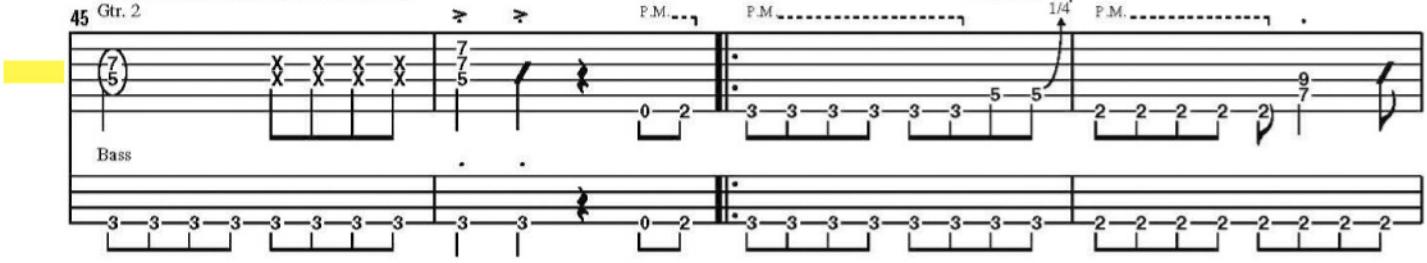
(2.) Collects
(3.) Well he's
(4.) Just so

G5 Gmaj7 N.C.(G5) (F♯m) E5

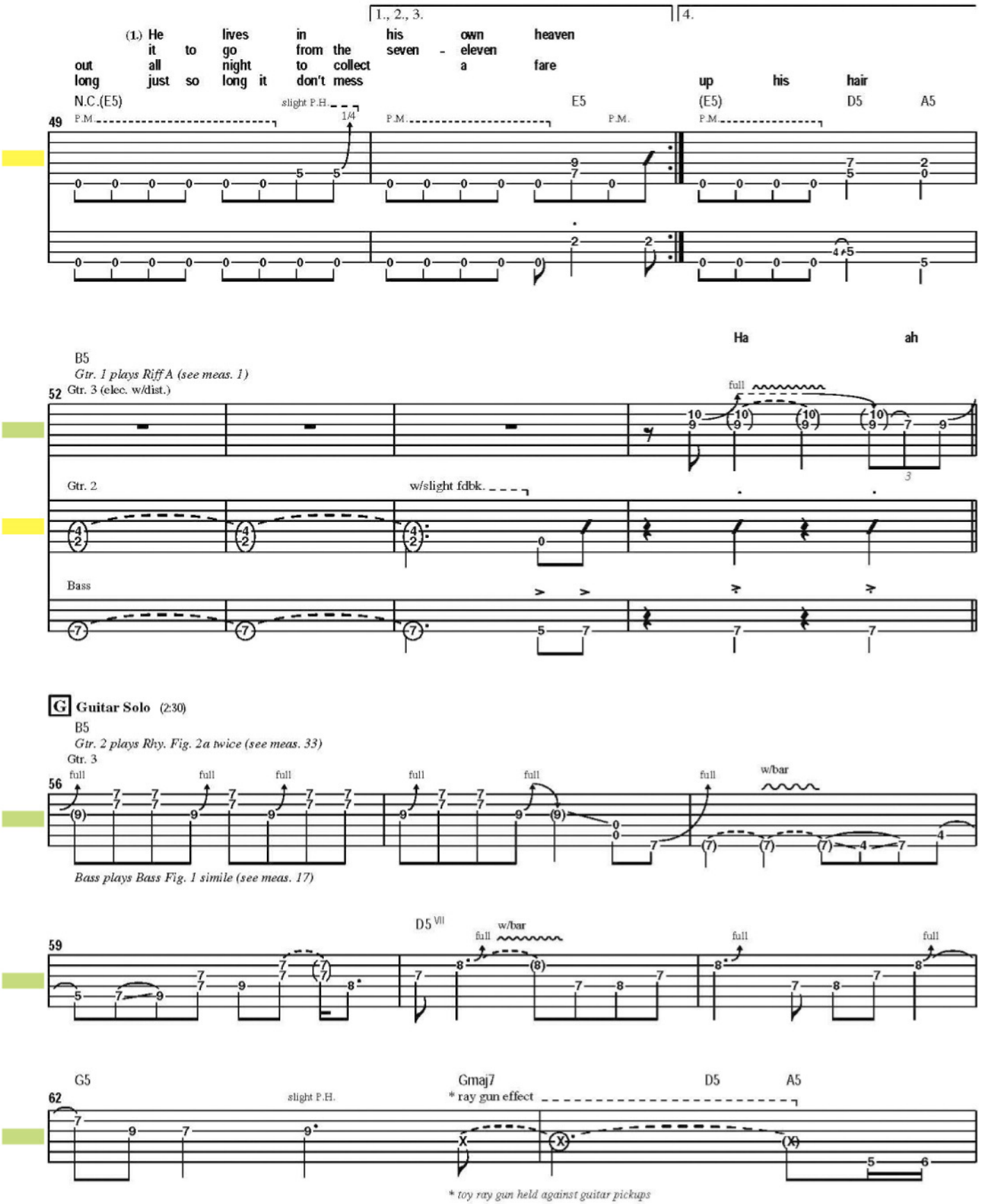
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see meas. 39)

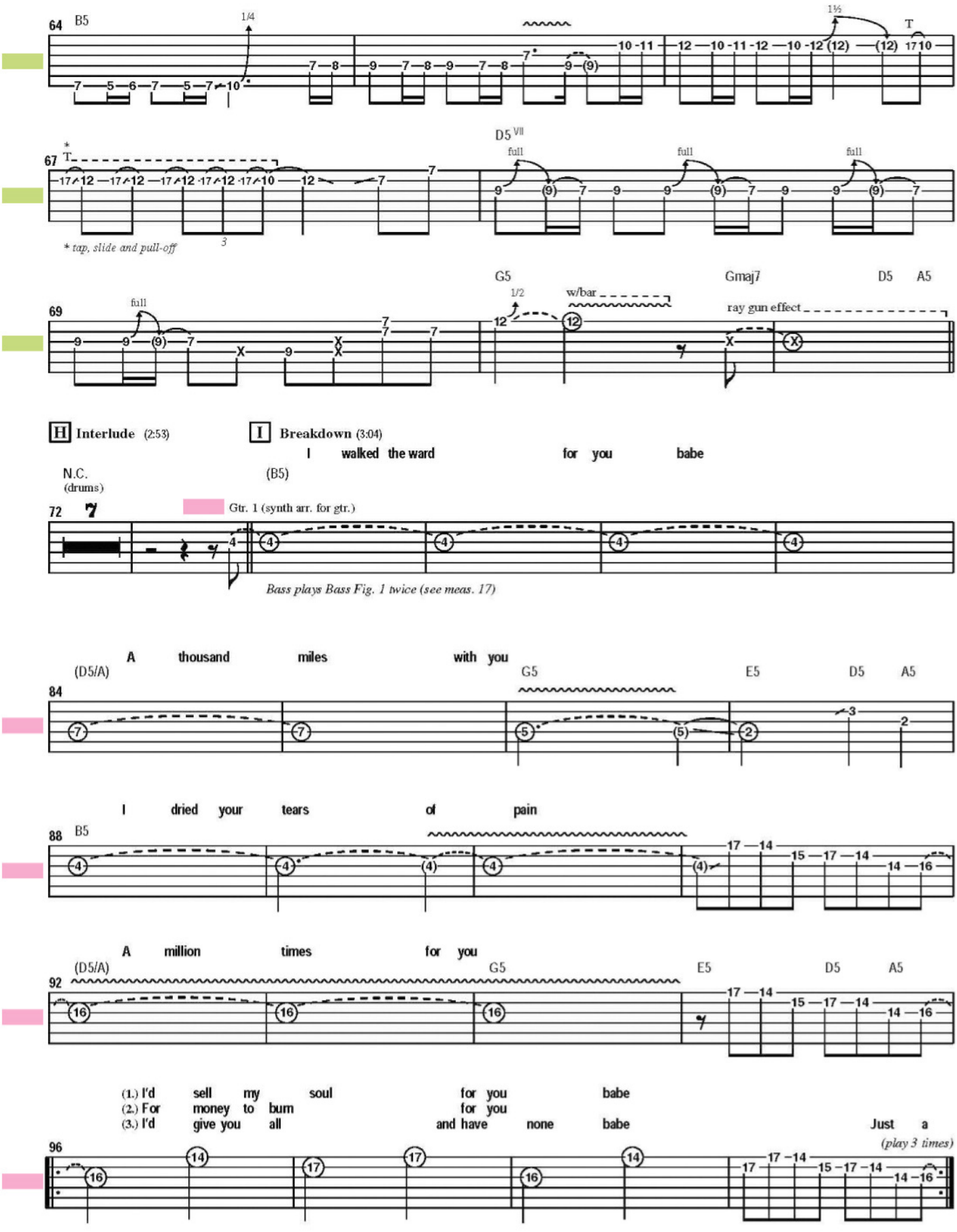
45 Gtr. 2

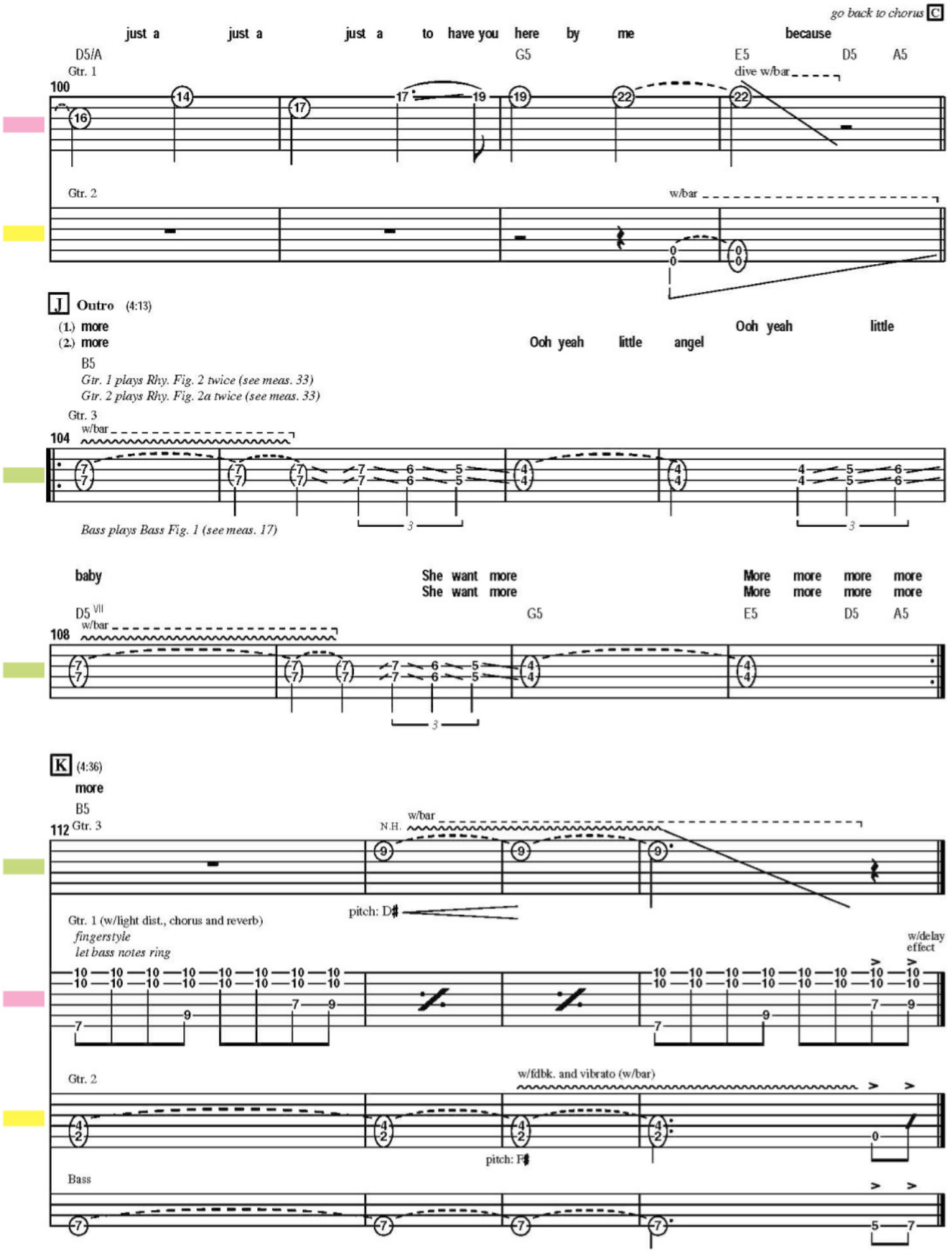
P.M. P.M. slight P.H. 1/4 P.M.



Bass


1., 2., 3.
4.
(1.) He lives in his own heaven
it to go from the seven - eleven
out all night to collect a fare
long just so long it don't mess up his hair
N.C.(E5)
slight P.H.
1/4
E5
(E5)
D5
A5
49
P.M.
Ha ah
B5
Gtr. 1 plays Riff A (see meas. 1)
Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)
52
full
Gtr. 2
w/slight fdbk.
Bass
G Guitar Solo (2:30)
B5
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2a twice (see meas. 33)
Gtr. 3
56
full
w/bar
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see meas. 17)
D5 VII
59
G5
Gmaj7
D5
A5
62
slight P.H.
* ray gun effect
* toy ray gun held against guitar pickups


64 B5
1/4
1½
T
67
D5 VII
full
* T
* tap, slide and pull-off
69
full
G5
1/2
w/bar
Gmaj7
D5
A5
ray gun effect
H Interlude (2:53)
I Breakdown (3:04)
I walked the ward for you babe
N.C.
(drums)
(B5)
72
Gtr. 1 (synth arr. for gtr.)
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see meas. 17)
A thousand miles with you
(D5/A)
G5
E5
D5
A5
84
I dried your tears of pain
88 B5
A million times for you
(D5/A)
G5
E5
D5
A5
92
(1.) I'd sell my soul for you babe
(2.) For money to burn for you
(3.) I'd give you all and have none babe
Just a
(play 3 times)
96


go back to chorus C
just a just a just a to have you here by me because
D5/A G5 E5 D5 A5
Gtr. 1
dive w/bar
100
Gtr. 2
w/bar
J Outro (4:13)
(1.) more
(2.) more
Ooh yeah little angel
Ooh yeah little
B5
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 twice (see meas. 33)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2a twice (see meas. 33)
Gtr. 3
w/bar
104
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 17)
baby
She want more
She want more
More more more more
More more more more
D5 VII
G5 E5 D5 A5
w/bar
108
K (4:36)
more
B5
Gtr. 3
112
N.H.
w/bar
pitch: D♯
Gtr. 1 (w/light dist., chorus and reverb)
fingerstyle
let bass notes ring
w/delay effect
Gtr. 2
w/fdbk. and vibrato (w/bar)
pitch: F♯
Bass

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The Doors

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A **Intro** (0:02)

Softly and Moderately ♩ = 108

*N.C. (Em) Esus4 (Em)

fingerstyle nylon-string acoustic guitar

Let ring throughout, unless indicated otherwise (by rests or staccato markings).

1

*Chord names denote general harmony throughout.

(Em9)

6

D/E Em D/E Em D/E Em

10

B **1st Verse** (0:32)

15 Am D/A

C/A D/A Em D Cmaj7 Cmaj7/6♯4

20

C **2nd Verse** (0:59)

Em

25

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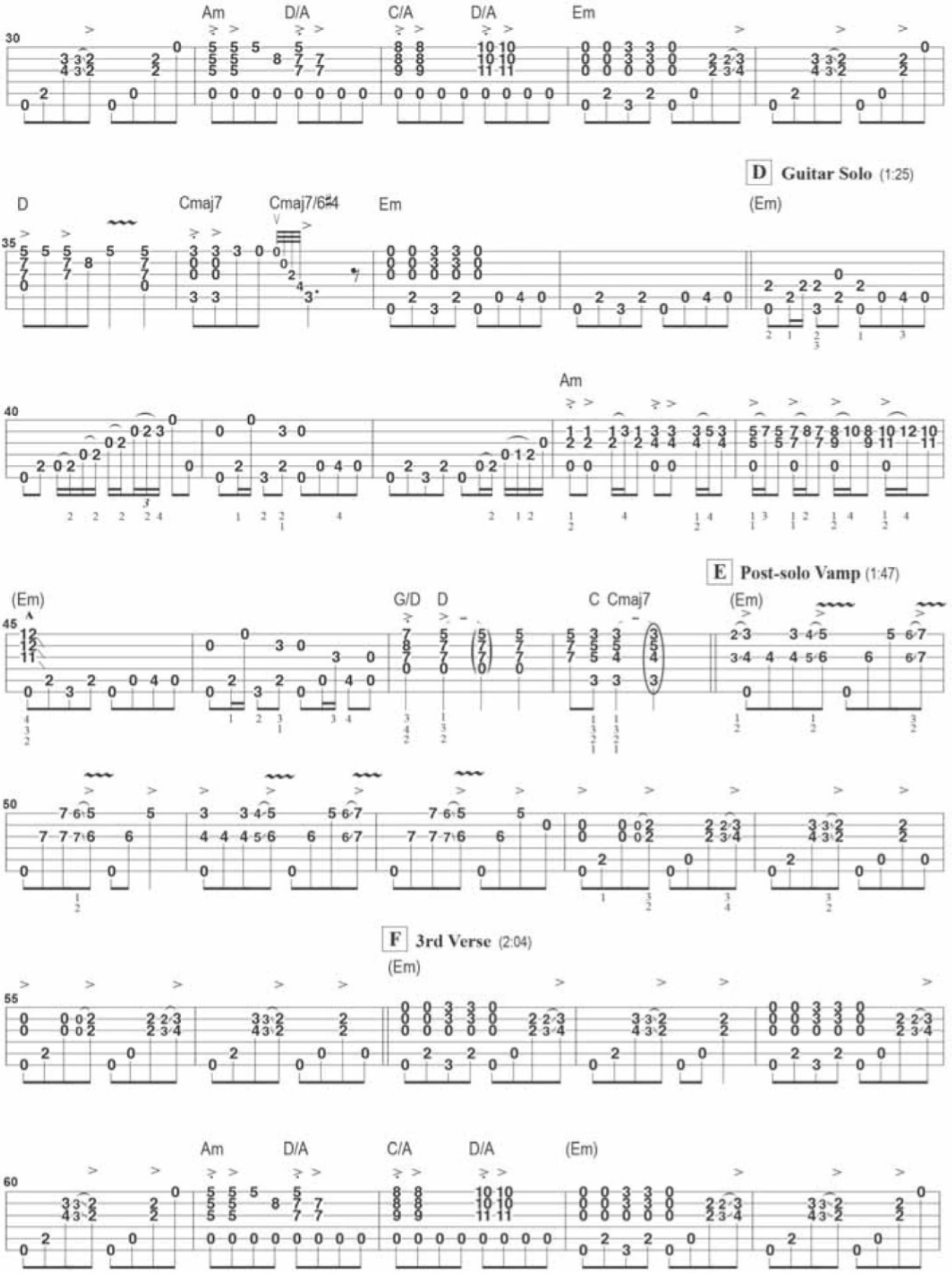
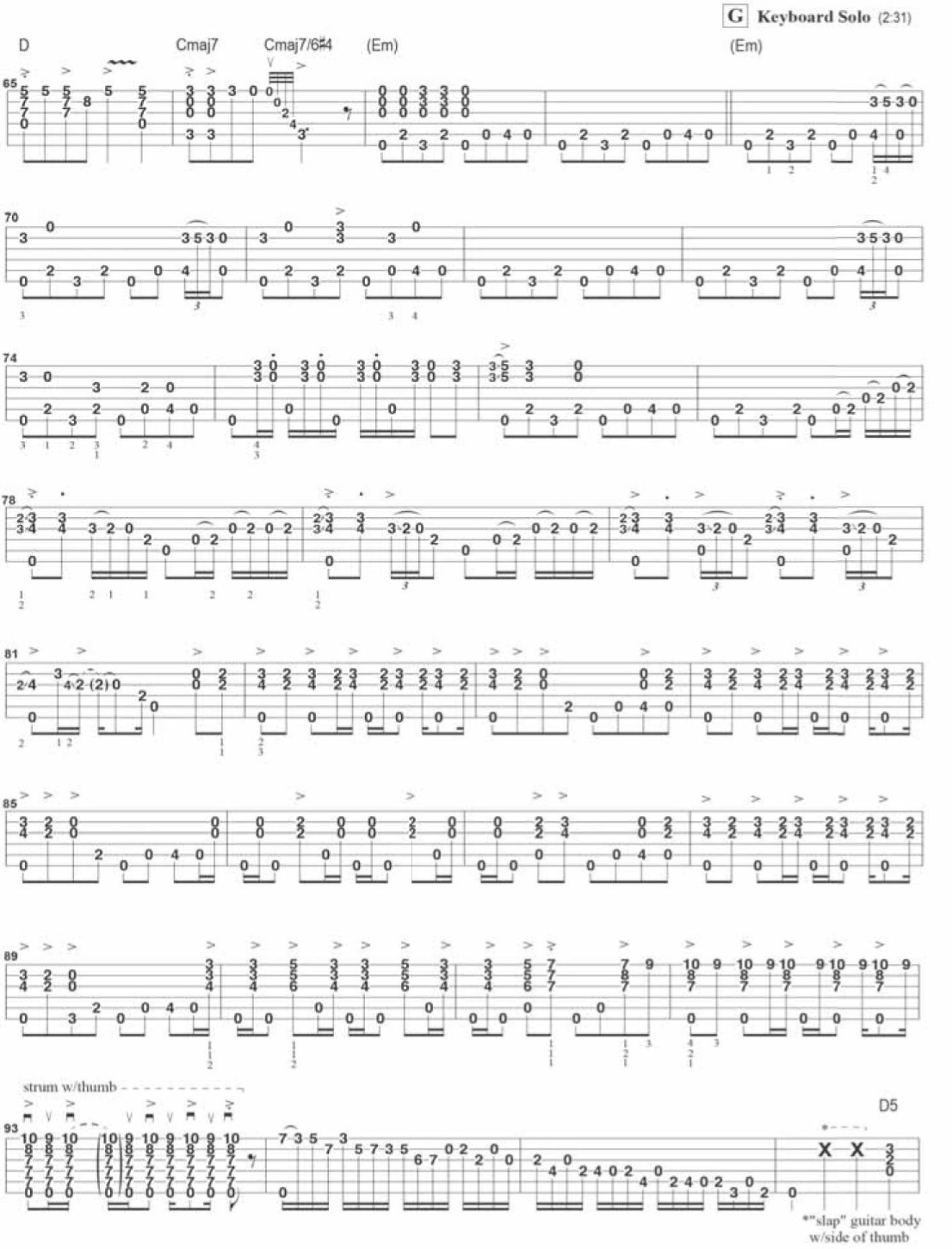
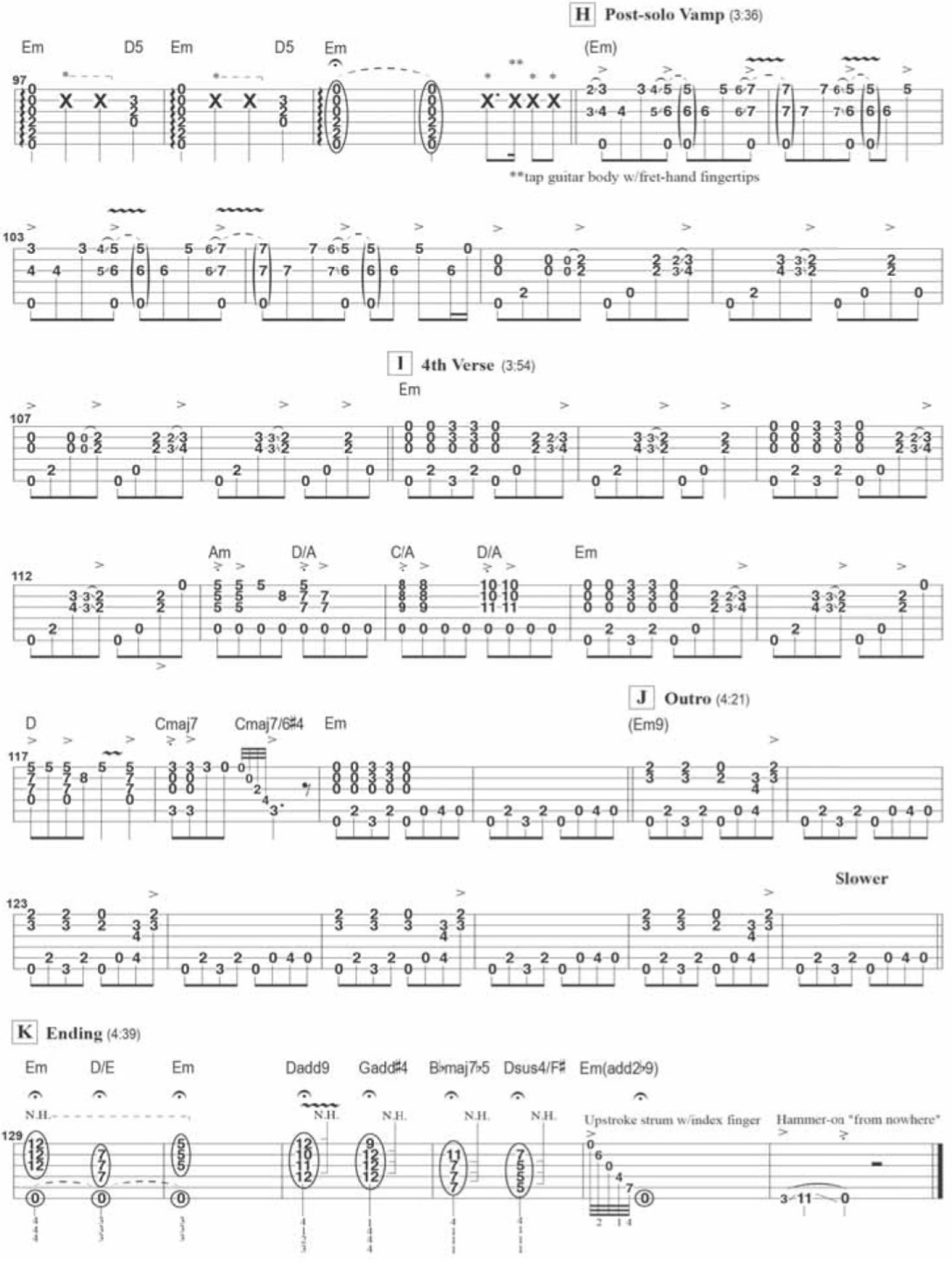

Am
D/A
C/A
D/A
Em
30
D Guitar Solo (1:25)
D
Cmaj7
Cmaj7/6
Em
(Em)
35
Am
40
E Post-solo Vamp (1:47)
(Em)
G/D
D
C
Cmaj7
(Em)
45
50
F 3rd Verse (2:04)
(Em)
55
Am
D/A
C/A
D/A
(Em)
60


G Keyboard Solo (2:31)
D
Cmaj7
Cmaj7/6#4
(Em)
(Em)
65
70
74
78
81
85
89
strum w/thumb
93
D5
*"slap" guitar body w/side of thumb


H Post-solo Vamp (3:36)
Em D5 Em D5 Em (Em)
**tap guitar body w/fret-hand fingertips
I 4th Verse (3:54)
Em
Am D/A C/A D/A Em
J Outro (4:21)
D Cmaj7 Cmaj7/6♯4 Em (Em9)
Slower
K Ending (4:39)
Em D/E Em Dadd9 Gadd♯4 B♭maj7♭5 Dsus4/F♯ Em(add2♭9)
N.H.
Upstroke strum w/index finger
Hammer-on "from nowhere"

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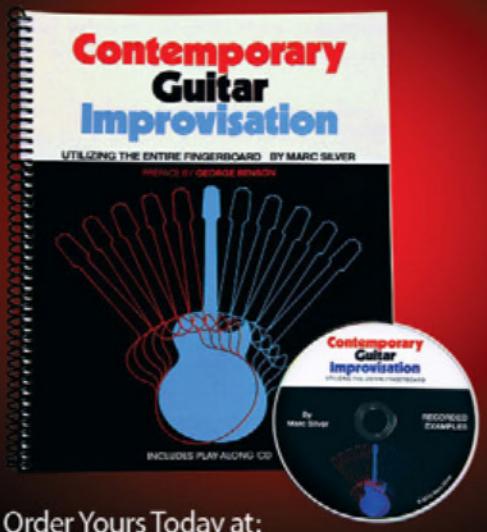

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ELECTRO-HARMONIX ELECTRIC MISTRESS FLANGER/FILTER MATRIX

CATEGORY: FLANGER PEDAL

Whether the Electric Mistress was first or not is a moot detail; what's important is that it sounded great and has remained popular for nearly five decades

THE EMERGENCE OF bucket-brigade device (BBD) integrated circuits like the Panasonic/Matsushita MN3001 in late 1974 and the Philips TDA1022 and Reticon SAD1024 in late 1975 kicked off the music industry's equivalent of the Space Race. These ICs enabled the creation of a wide variety of cool effects, including analog delay, chorus and flanger pedals, which numerous manufacturers rushed to develop. The first flangers to hit the market were studio rackmount products — the Eventide FL201 Instant Flanger and MXR M-111 Auto Flanger — followed shortly afterwards by the first (relatively) affordable stomp box flangers.

Was the Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress the first flanger pedal? Possibly. It was certainly *one of* the first, as confirmed by ads for the Electric Mistress, MXR Flanger and Tycobrahe Pedalflanger that appeared concurrently in *Guitar Player* magazine in late 1976. (Another contender is the rare Seamoon Studio Flanger — the A/DA Flanger's predecessor — which appeared around this time as well.) Whether the Electric Mistress was first or not is a moot detail; what's important is that it sounded great and has remained popular for nearly five decades.

One alluring characteristic of the Electric Mistress is how it generates traditional sweeping flanging and lush chorus effects equally well. In basic terms, flanging and chorus are similar effects where a dry signal is mixed with a delayed signal processed by a low-frequency oscillator (LFO) that varies the delay time, the main difference being flanging occurs with delay times between 0.7 to around 10ms, while the sweet spot for chorus is generally between 10 to about 30ms or more, with some crossover of the two between 5 to 10ms. The Electric Mistress notably doesn't have a Manual (variable center delay time) control, so apparently its delay time is set at a fixed center that, at my best guess, is around 5 to 10ms.

Another factor in the Electric Mistress' distinctive sound is its Range control, which adjusts the width of the modulation by lowering the frequency range while maintaining consistent upper frequencies. This gives the effect much of its distinctive treble shimmer and bite. The Filter Matrix switch, which stops the LFO and "freezes" the flanging effect's frequency cancellations in mid-sweep, creates unusual metallic tones that can be "tuned" with the Range knob. The Rate knob covers a wide range from slow sweeps to vibrato-style fast warbles, and the Color knob dials in the intensity of the effect (a.k.a. feedback, regeneration, resonance, etc.).

David Gilmour and Andy Summers are the most well-known users of the original (i.e. pre-Deluxe version) Electric Mistress pedal. Gilmour used his mainly for slow sweeping flange effects on his solo and Pink Floyd albums during the late Seventies and early Eighties, while Summers dialed in a variety of effects from slow sweeps ("Bring On the Night") to shimmering chorus ("Walking On the Moon"). Electro-Harmonix's recent rebranding of the Deluxe Electric Mistress as the Andy Summers Walking On the Moon pedal should be the final definitive proof that he used a flanger and not a chorus pedal on that song, although that still won't stop online forum charlatans from claiming otherwise.

Other notable users include Alex Lifeson (Rush's "Spirit of the Radio" and "Red Barchetta" solo), Robin Trower (*In City Dreams*), Dimebag Darrell (Pantera's *Great Southern Trendkill*), Billy Corgan (Smashing Pumpkins' *Gish* and *Siamese Dream*), James "Munky" Shaffer (Korn's "No Place to Hide"), Keith Levene (PiL's "Public Image"), Travis Stever (Coheed and Cambria) and John Ashton (Psychedelic Furs).

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

TRADITIONAL SLOW FLANGING: Rate: 2, Range: 9, Color: 6, Filter Matrix: Off
Tip: Overdrive/distortion either before or after the pedal enhances the jet-like "swoosh."

MOON CHORUS: Rate: 6.5, Range: 8, Color: 3, Filter Matrix: Off
Tip: Use single-coil pickups and clean tone for shimmer and shine.

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